



3

KASANE

d a r u m a
m a t s u u r a

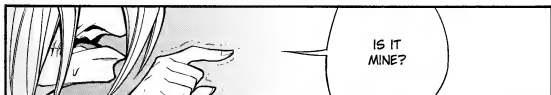
KASANE



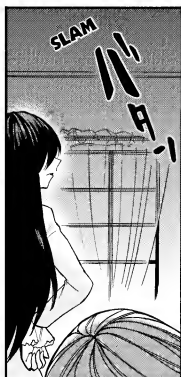
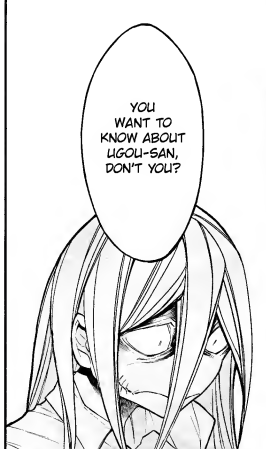
d a r u m a
m a t s u u r a

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IF I HAD
KNOWN THAT
THERE HAD
BEEN NOTHING
BETWEEN YOU
TWO, MAYBE
THINGS WOULD
HAVE ENDED
DIFFERENTLY.

I
STILL
THINK
...

IN
THE
END
...

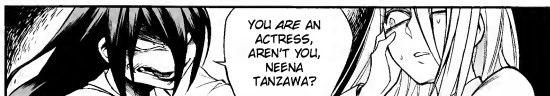
IT WAS
JUST A
DIRECTOR'S
LAPSE OF
JUDGMENT,
TOYING
WITH US
BOTH.

BUT
...

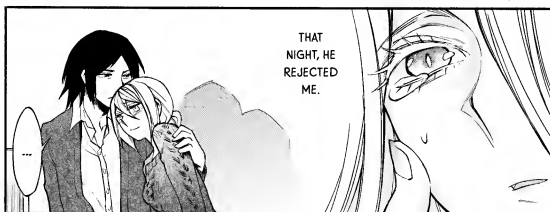


AND I
TOTALLY
FELL
FOR IT.

IN
ORDER
TO
PREVENT
THAT,
YOU PUT
ON AN ACT
OF HAVING
HAD SLEPT
WITH HIM,



YOU ARE AN
ACTRESS,
AREN'T YOU,
NEENA
TANZAWA?



THAT
NIGHT, HE
REJECTED
ME.





MOMMY
...

...NEENA?
I'M SORRY
FOR
CALLING
YOU WHILE
YOU'RE SO
BUSY.

THE SEAGULL
WAS AMAZING.
I'M AMAZED
YOU'VE COME
THIS FAR.



I WAS SO
WORRIED WHEN
YOU RAN OUT,
SAYING YOU
WOULD FIGHT
YOUR ILLNESS
AND CONTINUE
ACTING, BUT
NOW, I'M
FINALLY AT
REST.

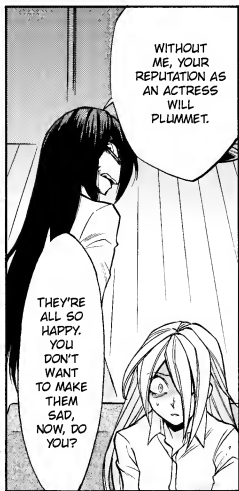
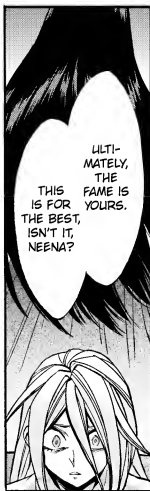
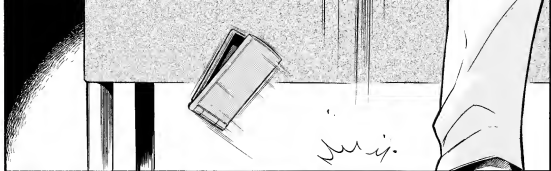
BEEP

YOUR
FATHER AND
I ARE SO
HAPPY TO SEE
WHAT YOU'VE
ACCOMPLISHED.
WE'LL ALWAYS
BE SUPPORTING
YOU.



THESE
ARE THE
MESSAGES
THAT CAME
IN WHILE
YOU WERE
SLEEPING.

YOU
SHOULD
LISTEN
TO
THEM.







NEENA
HERSELF
WAS
ASSAULTED
BY EVER-
MORE
FREQUENT
SLEEPING
EPISODES,
AND SPENT
HER DAYS
IN HER
ROOM,
IN THE
DARK.

AND
SO, AS
THE
NAME
NEENA
TANZAWA
GREW
EVER
MORE
FAMOUS
...



AFTER THAT,
KASANE
PERFORMED
IN A NUMBER
OF PLAYS,
REFINING
BOTH HER
BEAUTY
AND HER
ACTING.



NEENA'S
VACANT SPELLS
WERE MORE
FREQUENT,
OCCURRING
EVEN WHEN SHE
WAS AWAKE.

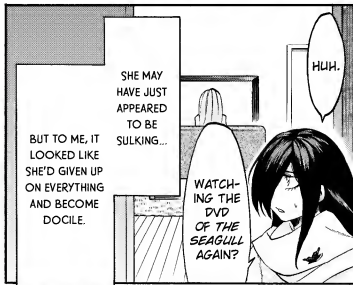
EVENTUALLY,
A YEAR AND
A HALF AFTER
THE TWO HAD
FIRST MET...



THEY'RE
IN THE
CLOSET
BY THE
DOOR...
IN THE
BLUE
BOX.



NEENA,
I WANT TO
BORROW
THOSE WHITE
GLOVES THAT
YOU WERE
USING LAST
YEAR.

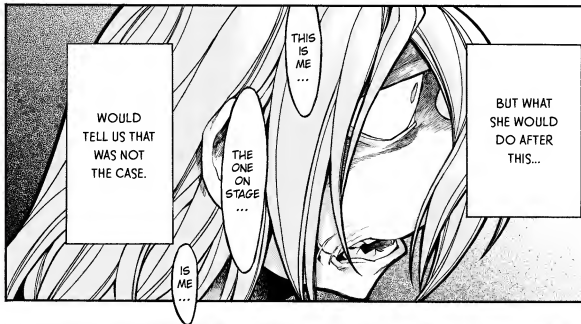


SHE MAY
HAVE JUST
APPEARED
TO BE
SULKING...

BUT TO ME, IT
LOOKED LIKE
SHE'D GIVEN UP
ON EVERYTHING
AND BECOME
DOCILE.

HUH.

WATCH-
ING THE
DVD
OF THE
SEAGULL
AGAIN?



THIS
IS ME
...

THE
ONE
ON
STAGE
...

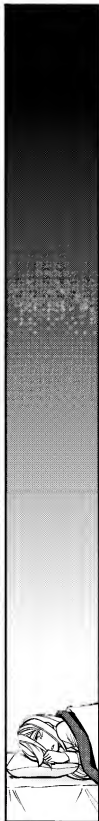
IS
ME
...

BUT WHAT
SHE WOULD
DO AFTER
THIS...

WOULD
TELL US THAT
WAS NOT
THE CASE.



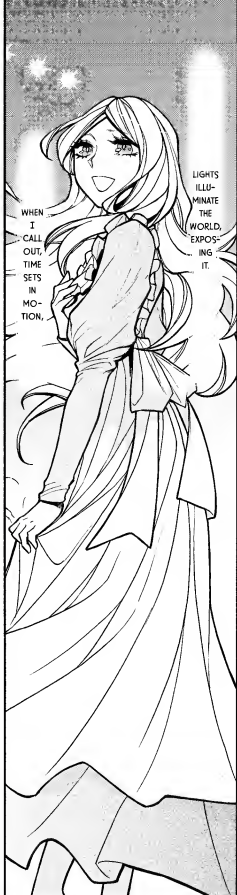
THE
LIGHTS
WILL SOON
GO ON
AGAIN.



COULD
ANY-
THING
ELSE
BE SO
WON-
DER-
FUL?

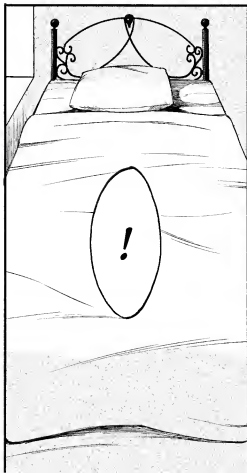
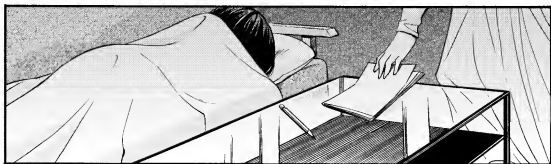


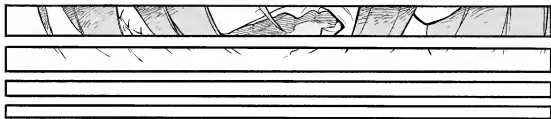
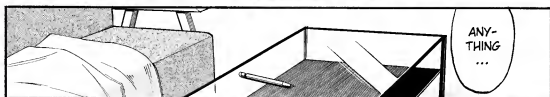
AND
MY
FORM
WILL
BE-
COME
A VIVID
MEM-
ORY
WITH-
IN
EVERY-
ONE.

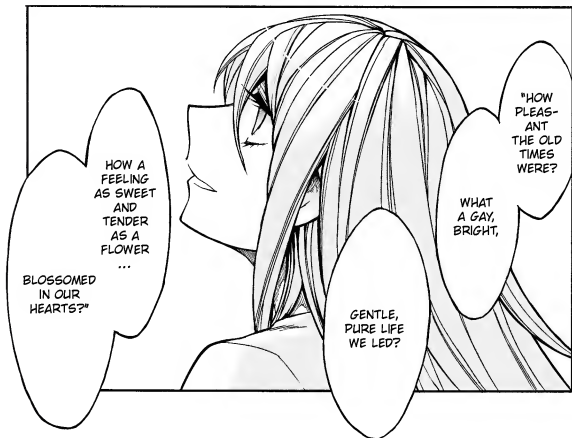


WHEN
I
CALL
OUT,
TIME
SETS
IN
MO-
TION,

LIGHTS
ILLU-
MINATE
THE
WORLD,
EXPOS-
ING
IT.











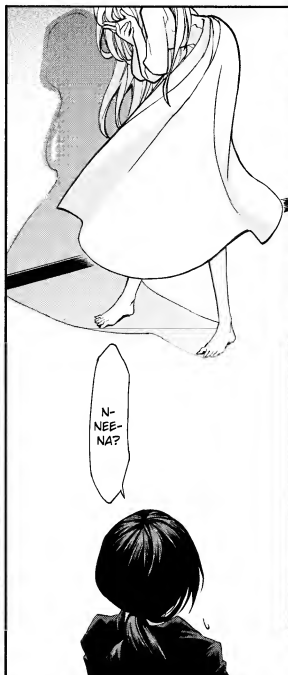
IT'S
ALL
YOUR
FAULT I
ENDED
UP THIS
WAY...

KA-
SANE!

PANT

PANT

PANT



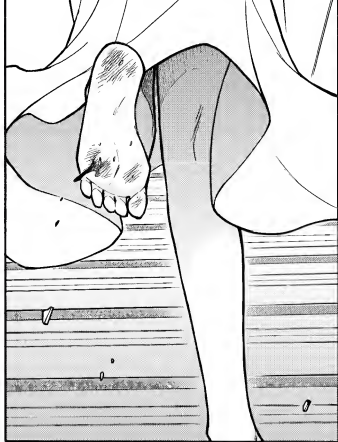
I'M NOT
NINA OR
NEENA
TANZAWA
ANYMORE

...
I'M
NO
ONE!

I DON'T
EXIST IN
ANYONE'S
MEMORIES!

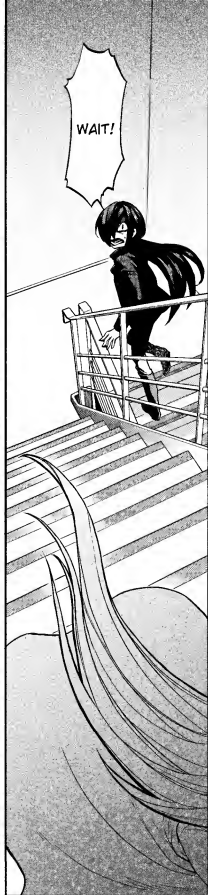




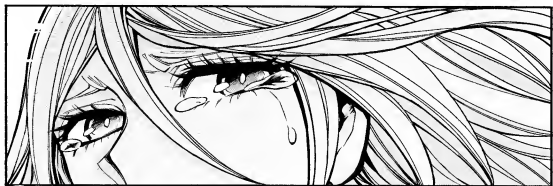


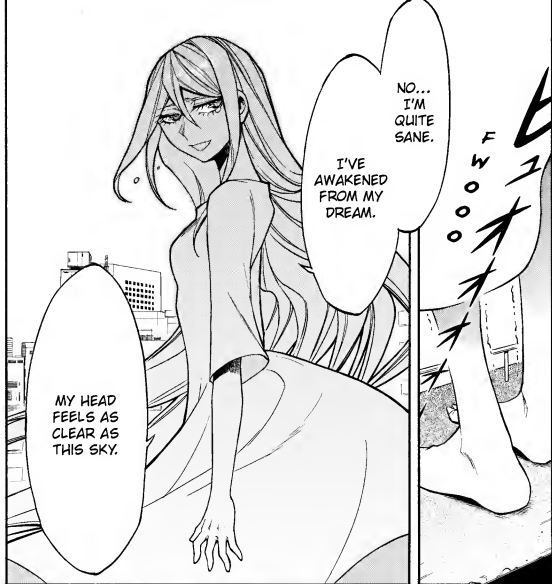
IS
HABUTA-
SAN NOT
HERE
YET?!

SHE'S
NOT IN
HER RIGHT
MIND...



WAIT!





MY HEAD
FEELS AS
CLEAR AS
THIS SKY.

NO...
I'M
QUITE
SANE.

I'VE
AWAKENED
FROM MY
DREAM.



I DIDN'T WANT
ANYONE TO
FORGET ME...

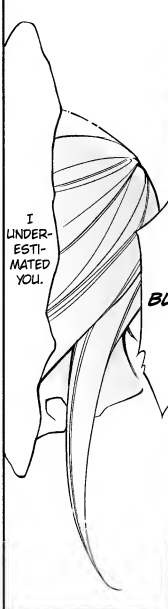


THAT'S
WHY I
THOUGHT,
WHILE
I WAS
SLEEPING
...
YOU
WOULD
BRIDGE
THOSE GAPS
FOR ME.



WHEN
I WOKE
UP FROM
MY SLEEP,
EVERY-
THING
THAT WAS
SUPPOSED
TO HAVE
COME
BACK TO
ME...

WAS
STOLEN
AWAY!



I
UNDER-
ESTI-
MATED
YOU.



THAT'S
RIGHT!
THAT'S WHY
I'VE BEEN
ACTING AS
NEENA
TANZAWA-

BUT...



ON YOUR
ROAD TO
BECOMING
AN UNFOR-
GETTABLE
ACTRESS.

OUR
NEXT
SHOW
IS AN IM-
PORTANT
STEP...

THE
FAME
IS ALL
YOURS!

NEE-
NA,



KASANE...
YOU'RE AN
AMAZING
ACTRESS.

...

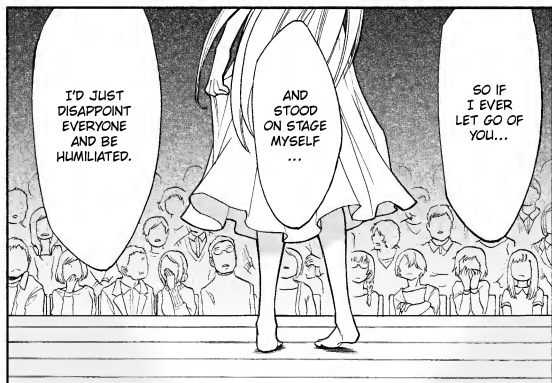


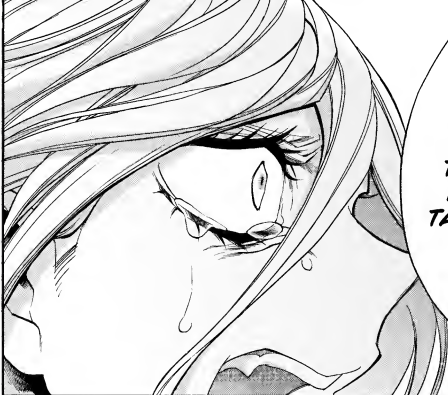
YOU,
HABUTA-
SAN...
AND ME,
TOO.

IT SURE
SOUNDS
NICE WHEN
YOU PUT
IT THAT
WAY...BUT
YOU'RE
ALL JUST
THINKING
ABOUT
YOUR-
SELVES!

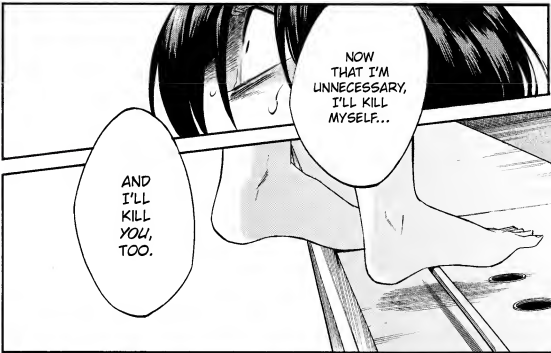


WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN, "ME"?
WHAT DO
YOU MEAN,
"OUR NEXT
SHOW"?





**I'M
GOING
TO KILL
NEENA
TANZAWA.**



**NOW
THAT I'M
UNNECESSARY,
I'LL KILL
MYSELF...**

**AND
I'LL
KILL
YOU,
TOO.**



NEENA!



"YOU
CANNOT
IMAGINE THE
STATE OF MIND
OF ONE WHO
KNOWS AS HE
GOES THROUGH
A PLAY..."

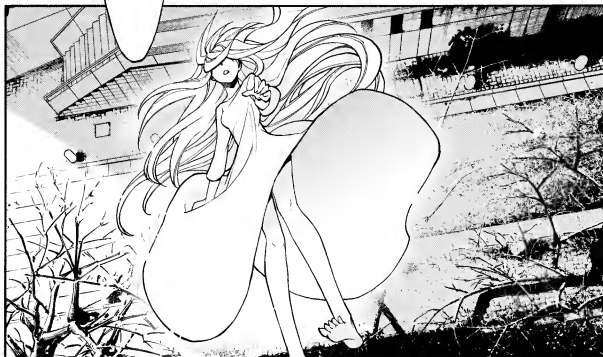
HOW
TERRIBLY
BADLY HE
IS ACTING."

THAT'S
...

RUSH

I...





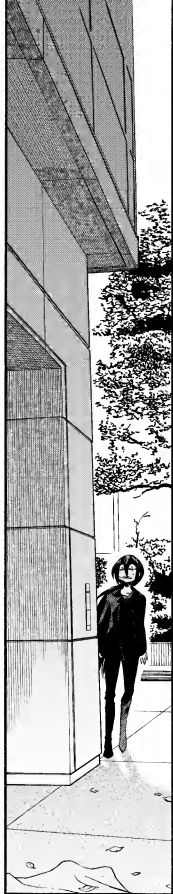


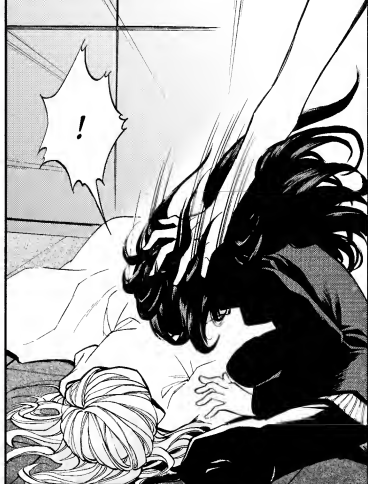
WHY?!

THUD

FLAP

FLAP









OH...







FATE...
REPEATS
ITSELF.

HA-
BLITA-
SAN?

IZA-
NA
...

THE
NAME
SLIPPED
FROM
MY
LIPS.

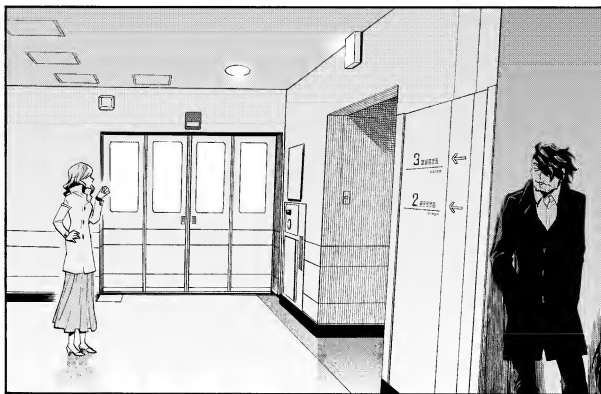
* THE TERM FOR "REPEAT" HERE INCLUDES THE CHARACTER IN KASANE'S NAME.

Chapter Twenty: Ulterior Motives





OPERATING ROOM







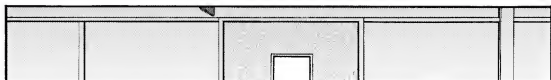
THAT'S
A
SHOCK.

SHE'S
ALIVE.



THANK
GOD
...





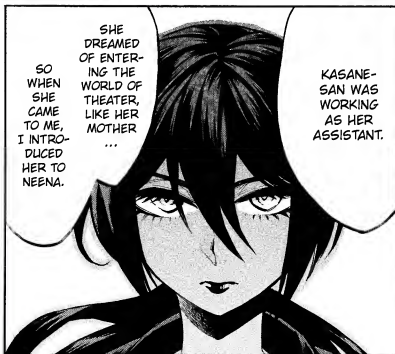


WHO'S
THE
YOUNG
LADY?

Y-
YES.
BY
THE
WAY
...



PLEASED
TO MEET YOU.
I'M NEENA
TANZAWA.

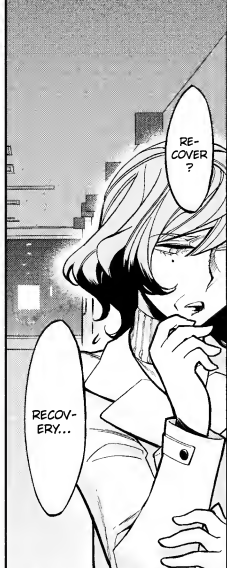


SHE
DREAMED
OF ENTER-
ING THE
WORLD OF
THEATER,
LIKE HER
MOTHER
...
SO
WHEN
SHE
CAME
TO ME,
I INTRO-
DUCED
HER TO
NEENA.

KASANE-
SAN WAS
WORKING
AS HER
ASSISTANT.



SHE'S AN
ACTRESS,
ACTIVE IN
THEATER
AND FILM.



RE-
COVER ?

RECOV-
ERY...



WILL
KASANE-
SAN BE
ABLE TO
RECOVER?



OH!

SHE
NEVER
CONTACTED
ME AT ALL,
SO I DIDN'T
HAVE THE
SLIGHTEST
CLUE.



IF HER
COMA
CONTINUES
FOR MORE
THAN
THREE
MONTHS
...

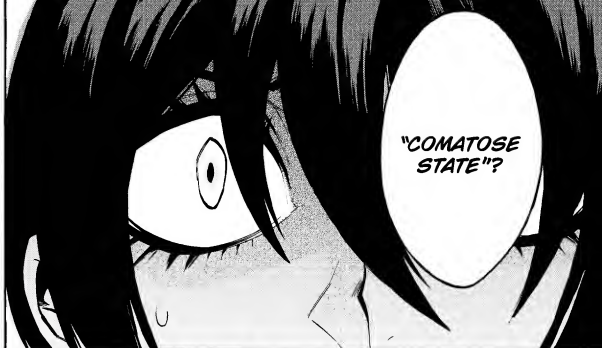
SHE
WILL BE
JUDGED
TO BE IN A
COMATOSE
STATE.

AND
EVEN IF
SHE DOES,
WE DON'T
KNOW IF
SHE CAN
HAVE THE
SAME LIFE-
STYLE AS
BEFORE.

THE
DOCTOR
SAYS
SHE MAY
OR MAY
NOT
WAKE
UP.



MAY PROVE
DIFFICULT.



"COMATOSE
STATE"?



BUT THE
PROBLEM
IS...

YES,
THAT'S
RIGHT.

THEN
SHE MAY
NEED
CARE.

**SHE JUMPED
BECAUSE SHE
WANTED TO DIE,
DIDN'T SHE?**

THE
HOSPITAL
MIGHT NOT
LET HER
STAY FOR
MORE THAN
THREE
MONTHS.



WHEN
SHE
WANTED
TO DIE?

WOULD IT
REALLY MAKE
HER HAPPY
TO FORCIBLY
LENGTHEN
HER LIFE...



NO!

YOU
JUST
WANT
TO KILL
ME!

IT'S
BLATANTLY
OBVIOUS YOU
WANT TO GET
YOUR HANDS ON
MY MOTHER'S
WILL WITHOUT
GOING THROUGH
THE TROUBLE
OF TAKING
CARE OF ME!



IT
SEEMS IT'S
POSSIBLE
TO REFUSE
ANY LIFE-
PROLONGING
TREATMENT
...

IT WOULD
BE HARD,
BUT THAT
MAY BE
BEST, FOR
HER SAKE.



HAVE
YOU EVER
ONCE
DONE
ANYTHING
TO ACT AS
A MOTHER
TO ME?

YOU
KICKED
ME OUT
OF THE
HOUSE!



SHE
DIDN'T DO
WELL IN
SCHOOL,
AND
DROPPED
OUT,
TOO...

AND I
DON'T
THINK I,
ALONE,
COULD
MAKE UP
FOR THE
SADNESS
SHE FELT
WITHOUT
HER
MOTH-
ER.



IT SEEMS THIS HAS BEEN QUITE THE SHOCK FOR HER.

IS SHE ALL RIGHT ?

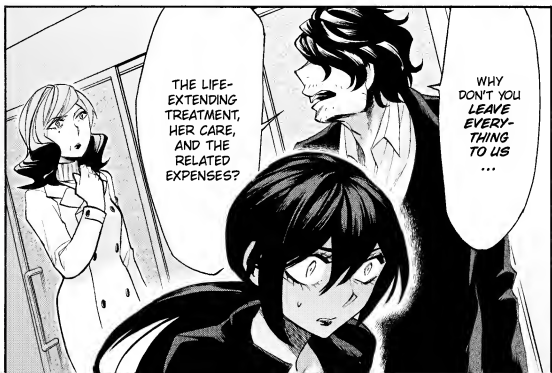


アきッ
SURPRISE



AND NOT BEING FAMILY, IT'S NOT OUR PLACE TO SAY, BUT... HOW ABOUT THIS:

I RECOGNIZE THAT WE WON'T KNOW FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS, WELL ...



THE LIFE-EXTENDING TREATMENT, HER CARE, AND THE RELATED EXPENSES?

WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE EVERYTHING TO US ...



I'M
SORRY. I
APPRECIATE
THE
SENTIMENT
...

BUT
THIS IS
A FAMILY
ISSUE.



W-WELL,
KASANE-SAN
IS VERY
IMPORTANT
TO US, TOO.



YOU?!

WHY
?!



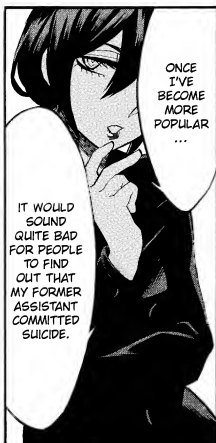
SHE'S SO FIXATED
ON THE INHERITANCE,
SMOOTH TALK WON'T
BE ENOUGH TO
CONVINCE HER.

IT
WON'T
WORK,
HABUTA-
SAN.

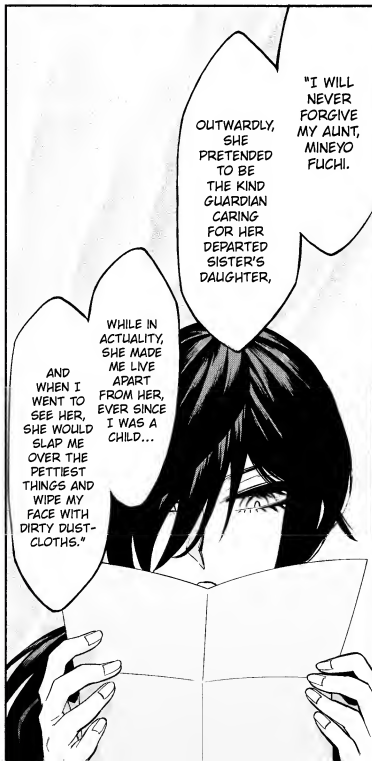


I BELIEVE
THIS LADY WILL
UNDERSTAND
JUST HOW
IMPORTANT IT
IS TO KEEP UP
APPEARANCES.

LET'S BE
HONEST
WITH EACH
OTHER.







OUTWARDLY,
SHE
PRETENDED
TO BE
THE KIND
GUARDIAN
CARING
FOR HER
DEPARTED
SISTER'S
DAUGHTER,

"I WILL
NEVER
FORGIVE
MY AUNT,
MINEYO
FUCHI.

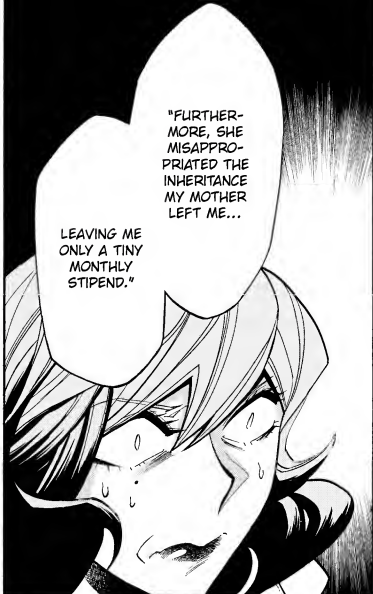
WHILE IN
ACTUALITY,
SHE MADE
ME LIVE
APART
FROM HER,
EVER SINCE
I WAS A
CHILD...

AND
WHEN I
WENT TO
SEE HER,
SHE WOULD
SLAP ME
OVER THE
PETTIEST
THINGS AND
WIPE MY
FACE WITH
DIRTY DUST-
CLOTHS."





WH-
WHAT
IS...



LEAVING ME
ONLY A TINY
MONTHLY
STIPEND."

"FURTHER-
MORE, SHE
MISAPPRO-
PRIATED THE
INHERITANCE
MY MOTHER
LEFT ME..."



I FOUND
IT TUCKED
INTO MY
BAG.

THIS IS
KASANE
FUCHI'S
SUICIDE
NOTE.

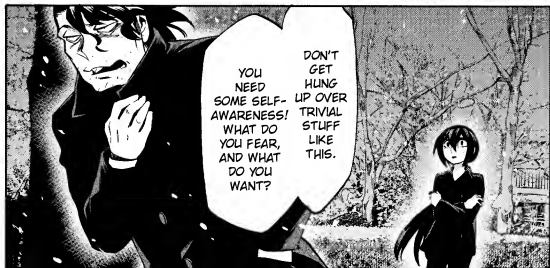


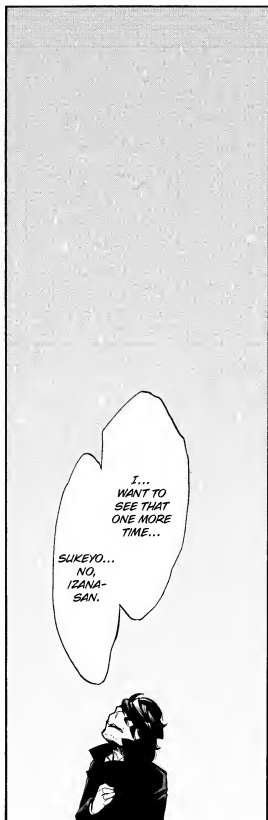






*IS THIS
REALLY
A GOOD
IDEA?*





I...
WANT TO
SEE THAT
ONE MORE
TIME...

SUKEYO...
NO,
IZANA-
SAN.



THAT
WAS
EXACTLY
WHAT
MADE
HER SO
EX-
TREMELY
BEAUTI-
FUL.



SHE
NEVER
HESITATED
LIKE
THIS
...

BECAUSE
THE HELL
SHE WENT
THROUGH
FOR BEING
BORN UGLY
COULDN'T
EVEN
COMPARE
TO WHAT
KASANE'S
EXPERI-
ENCED.

KASANE

Chapter Twenty-One: Repentance

ONE
MONTH
LATER...



BUT
NEENA DIDN'T
WAKE UP.

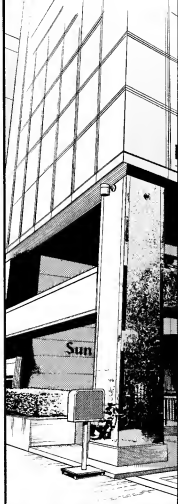
I WAITED
AND
WAITED...



I KEPT
USING HER
FACE TO
GO ON
STAGE.

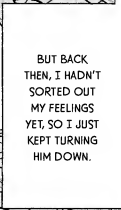
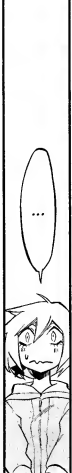
WITHOUT YET
HAVING FIGURED
OUT WHAT I
SHOULD DO...

SEE
YOU
LATER.











IT'S ONLY WHEN I'M WITH HIM THAT I CAN FORGET ABOUT THE BAD STUFF ...

I JUST HAVE SO MUCH FUN WITH HIM!



...



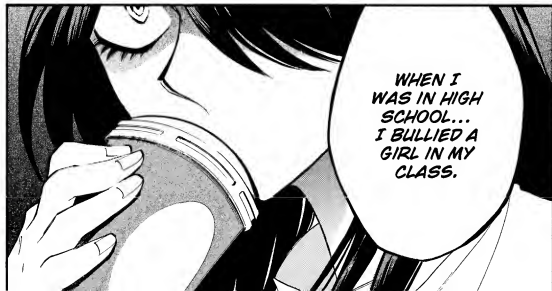
YEAH.



UM...
WELL ...

HUH?

WHAT "BAD STUFF" ?



WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL... I BULLIED A GIRL IN MY CLASS.



THINKING,
WHAT
I DID
WASN'T
RIGHT.

IT STILL
BOTHERS
ME NOW, AND
I FEEL
CRAPPY...

AND...
BECAUSE
OF ME, SHE
DROPPED OUT
OF SCHOOL.



BACK THEN,
I DIDN'T
REALLY MEAN
TO BULLY
HER
...

I DON'T KNOW
WHERE THE
CHANGE OF HEART
CAME FROM, BUT
I'M SURE HER
REMORSE IS REAL.

BUT...

BUT
THINKING
BACK ON
IT NOW...

AS IF
SHE WERE
VOMITING
OUT
SOMETHING
SHE'D BEEN
BUILDING
UP.

AFTER THAT,
AYANE SEKI
SPOKE OF HER
COMPLETE
REPENTANCE
FOR BULLYING
KASANE FUCHI...



I...

I HAVE
SCARS THAT
WILL NEVER
DISAPPEAR,
ALL MY LIFE.

FOR HER,
HER UPSET
IS SO MILD,
JUST BEING
WITH THE
GUY SHE LIKES
LETS HER
FORGET IT.

I JUST
COULDN'T
FORGIVE
HER.



IT NEVER
SAVES THE
ONE YOU
WRONGED.



REPENTANCE IS
JUST ABOUT
YOUR OWN
SALVATION...

NONE
OF THOSE
WORDS
WILL REACH
YOUR
HEART.

JUST LIKE
HOW NO
MATTER HOW
MUCH I
REPENT
TO YOU...



ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT,
NEENA?

THE THINGS SHE DID TO ME
THEN, AND THE ANGER I
FELT THEN, CAME BUBBLING
UP AGAIN FROM THE
DEPTHS OF MY HEART.



AYANE SEKI...

NO, THAT
WOULDN'T BE
ENOUGH.

I WONDER...
IF AZAMINO
AND I WERE
TO HAVE A
RELATIONSHIP,
WOULD THAT
HURT HER?

USING THE
KIND OF BRUTAL
LANGUAGE
THAT SHE USED
TO SHOWER
UPON ME?



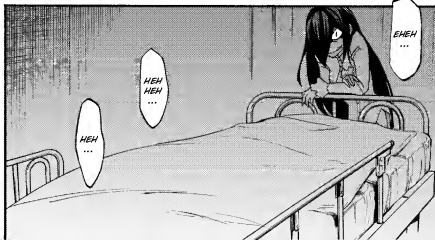
I KNOW, I'LL
TAKE IT BEYOND
BEING REJECTED
BY SOMEONE SHE
CARES FOR. HOW
ABOUT I HAVE
HIM DISPARAGE
EVERYTHING
ABOUT HER...

HEH
...

HEH
HEH
...

EHEH
...

I STILL DON'T
KNOW IF IT'S
POSSIBLE,
BUT THIS WILL
HELP TEACH
ME WHAT THE
LIPSTICK CAN
DO, TOO.



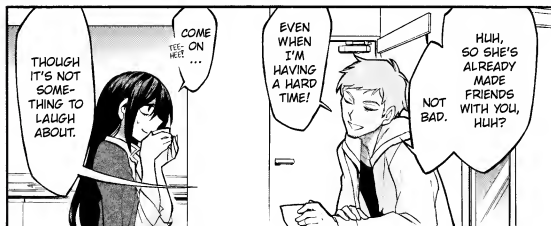


IT'S
ABOUT
SEKI-
SAN.

SHE
SEEMED
TROU-
BLED,
SO
I WAS
CON-
CERNED
ABOUT
THE
REASON
WHY.

WHAT
DID
YOU
WANT
TO
TALK
ABOUT,
CALL-
ING
ME
ALL
THE
WAY
OUT
TO
THIS
ROOM
WE
NEVER
USE?

GREEN ROOM 2



THOUGH
IT'S NOT
SOME-
THING TO
LAUGH
ABOUT.

COME
ON
TEE-
HEE!

EVEN
WHEN
I'M
HAVING
A HARD
TIME!

HUH,
SO SHE'S
ALREADY
MADE
FRIENDS
WITH YOU,
HUH?
NOT
BAD.



SHE WAS BULLYING THIS GIRL, BUT ONCE THAT GIRL LEFT, SEKI BECAME THE NEXT TARGET.

SHE SAID SHE STILL REMEMBERED A BLUNCH OF BULLYING STUFF FROM HIGH SCHOOL ...



SHE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL TO GET INTO THEATER RIGHT AWAY.



SEKI, HUH ...



SEEING YOU AGAIN HAS MADE ME FALL EVEN HARDER FOR YOU.

I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP.



HUH ?



SHE WAS WHINING ON AND ON TO ME ABOUT THAT STUFF.



BUT... THAT WON'T ERASE THE PAST! I STILL FEEL...



L
SLURP

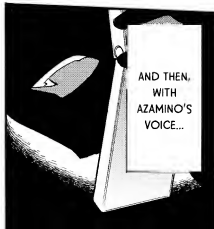
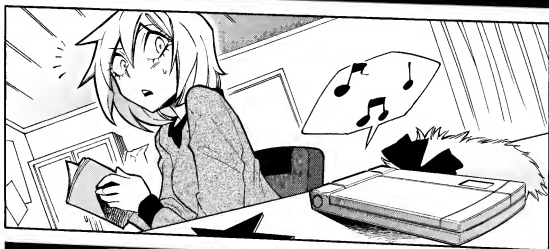
SO THAT'S WHY SHE'S SORRY FOR BULLYING ME.

NO WAY ...









I ALWAYS
THOUGHT
YOU WERE
A PAIN IN
THE ASS.

YOU'RE
JUST PLAIN
PHYSICALLY
REPUSSIVE.

I CALLED
AYANE SEKI
JUST TO
TEAR HER
DOWN...

I TRAMPLED,
TRASHED,
AND DIS-
PARAGED
EVERYTHING
ABOUT HER.

AZA-
MINO-
SA...

ARE YOU
CRYING?
UGH...

I'M SICK
OF HEARING
YOUR WHINING
AND SEEING
YOUR FACE,
SO COULD
YOU GET THE
FUCK OUT OF
MY LIFE?

I...

KA-
SANE!

HABUTA-
SAN? I'M
HEADED
TO THE
HOSPITAL
RIGHT
NOW.

HUH?

YOU
KISSED
SOMEONE
ELSE AND
SWITCHED
YOUR
FACES?!

BUT
NEENA'S
GOT HER
FACE
BACK.

YOU
STILL
HAVE
SOME
TIME
LEFT,



YEAH.

I KISSED
THEM WITH
NEENA'S
FACE ON, BUT
THE PERSON
DIDN'T BECOME
NEENA, THEY
GOT MY
FACE.

I SEE.
SO THIS
MEANS
WHEN
YOU KISS
SOME-
ONE NEW,

IT
CANCELS
OUT YOUR
PREVIOUS
FACE
SWAP.



URK
"h"
"

ANYWAY,
I TOLD
YOU NOT
TO GET
INTO
DANGEROUS
BUSINESS
WITHOUT
ASKING
ME!

WHO
DID
YOU
SWAP
FACES
WITH
?!

THE
SOUND
OPERATOR
FROM
THE
SEAGULL.

EVEN
I DON'T
KNOW
EVERY-
THING.
SHE
WAS A
VERY
CAUTIOUS
WOMAN.

FOR
SOME-
ONE WHO
HELPED
OUT MY
MOTHER,
IT SOUNDS
LIKE
THERE'S
A LOT
YOU DON'T
KNOW.

...



WHAT
?!

NO
WAY... KEI
AZAMINO?
DID HE DO
ANYTHING
TO YOU?

YOU
KNOW
?

HE'S
GREAT
AT HIS
JOB
...

BUT
YOU HEAR
NOTHING
BUT BAD
RUMORS
ABOUT HIS
RELATION-
SHIPS
WITH
WOMEN.

THEY
SAY HE'S
MADE
MOVES
ON COUNT-
LESS
WOMEN,
AND
FUCKED
THEM
OVER.

...

BUT IT MAY IN
FACT BE BETTER
FOR HER, TO
CUT OFF HER
RELATIONSHIP
WITH THAT
DOUCHEBAG.

WHAT I DID
WILL CERTAINLY
HAVE HURT
AYANE SEKI...

BUT
THAT'S...

WHEN I REALIZED
THAT, I WASN'T
FRUSTRATED; I
WAS RELIEVED.

BECAUSE
I WANT
NEENA TO
FORGIVE ME...
AREN'T I?

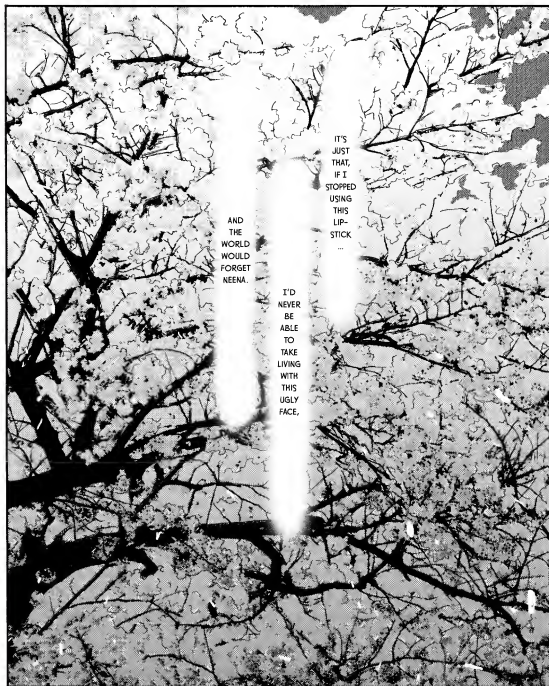
I'M JUST
TRYING TO
FORGIVE
AYANE SEKI
...

STUPID!



I DON'T
NEED
HER TO.

NEENA WON'T
FORGIVE ME,
ANYWAY.



AND
THE
WORLD
WOULD
FORGET
NEENA.

IT'S
JUST
THAT,
IF I
STOPPED
USING
THIS
LIP-
STICK
...

I'D
NEVER
BE
ABLE
TO
TAKE
LIVING
WITH
THIS
UGLY
FACE,

KASANE

LATER...

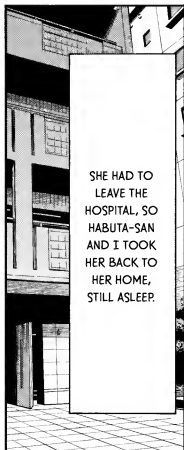
Azamino-san
has been
so meeeean
to meee!

Hey,
Neena-
saan?
Please,
I need
to talk
to you!



Chapter Twenty-Two: Castle of Thorns





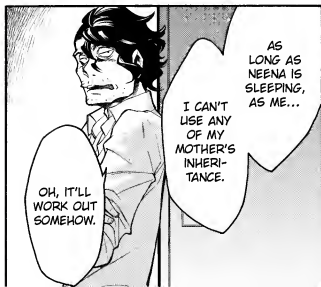
SHE HAD TO
LEAVE THE
HOSPITAL, SO
HABUTA-SAN
AND I TOOK
HER BACK TO
HER HOME,
STILL ASLEEP.

AT THAT
STAGE, THE
DOCTOR
FINALLY
PRONOUNCED
HER IN A
COMATOSE
STATE.



FINAN-
CIALLY
SPEAK-
ING.

IS ALL
OF THIS...
REALLY
GOING TO
WORK
OUT?



OH, IT'LL
WORK OUT
SOMEHOW.

I CAN'T
USE ANY
OF MY
MOTHER'S
INHERI-
TANCE.

AS
LONG AS
NEENA IS
SLEEPING,
AS ME...



THREE
MONTHS
PASSED
AFTER
NEENA
TANZAWA
FELL
UNCON-
SCIOUS.



YOU GOT
AN OFFER
FOR SALOMÉ,
DIDN'T YOU?



WHO
REQUESTS
THE HEAD OF
A MAN WHO
WAS MOVED
BY HER
DANCING AS
A REWARD.

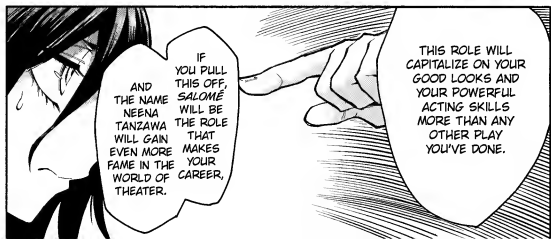
THE STORY
OF THE
BEAUTIFUL
AND
TERRIFYING
VIRGIN
PRINCESS
OF JUDÆA
...

OSCAR
WILDE'S
SALOMÉ
...



YES.

THOUGH
THAT'S
STILL
DOWN
THE
ROAD.



IF
YOU PULL
THIS OFF,
SALOMÉ
WILL BE
THE ROLE
THAT
MAKES
FAME IN
YOUR
CAREER,
THEATER.
AND
THE NAME
NEENA
TANZAWA
WILL GAIN
EVEN MORE
FAME IN THE
WORLD OF
THEATER.

THIS ROLE WILL
CAPITALIZE ON YOUR
GOOD LOOKS AND
YOUR POWERFUL
ACTING SKILLS
MORE THAN ANY
OTHER PLAY
YOU'VE DONE.



AS LONG
AS I HAVE
NEENA'S
FACE IN
HAND...



THIS MEANS
THAT AS LONG
AS YOU HAVE
NEENA'S FACE
IN HAND, YOU'LL
MOVE UP IN
THE WORLD OF
ACTING AT A
STEADY PACE.

THEN THE
MONEY WILL
COME AS A
MATTER OF
COURSE.



BECAUSE
WE CAN KEEP
YOUR SECRET
LOCKED UP.



AND FOR
THAT, IT'S MORE
CONVENIENT TO HAVE
NEENA HERE THAN
AT THE HOSPITAL.

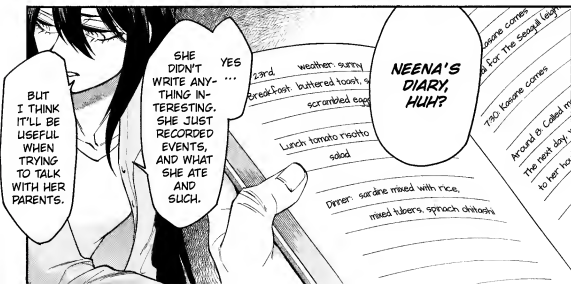


BUT,
HABUTA-
SAN...

WHAT DO
WE DO WHEN
SOMEONE
APPEARS TO
PUSH ASIDE
THOSE THORNS
AND COME
VISIT THE
PRINCESS?

WE'RE
THE EVIL
SORCERERS
HIDING
SLEEPING
BEAUTY IN
THE CASTLE
OF THORNS,
SO TO
SPEAK.

YES
...



IS ACTING THAT
TRANSCENDS
EVEN THE BOND
BETWEEN PARENT
AND CHILD...
EVEN POSSIBLE
FOR ME?

BUT CAN
I DECEIVE
THEM?



SORRY
TO BOTHER
YOU
WHEN
YOU'RE
SO
BUSY!

NEE-
NA!

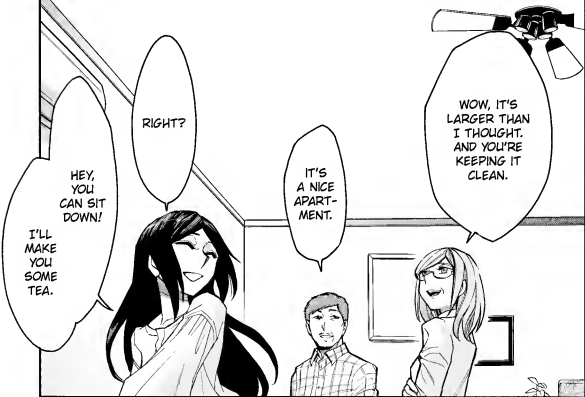
IT'S
OKAY!
COME
ON IN!



DADDY!
MOMMY!

IT'S
BEEN SO
LONG!





I'LL
MAKE
YOU
SOME
TEA.

HEY,
YOU
CAN SIT
DOWN!

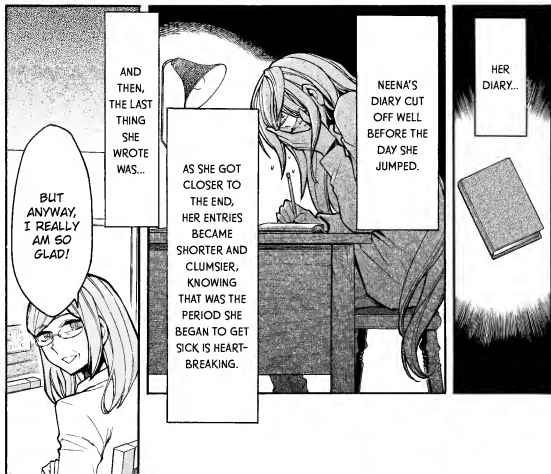
RIGHT?

IT'S
A NICE
APART-
MENT.

WOW, IT'S
LARGER THAN
I THOUGHT.
AND YOU'RE
KEEPING IT
CLEAN.

I KNOW
ENOUGH ABOUT
HER, FROM THE
RECORDS IN
HER DIARY.

IT'LL
BE
O.KAY.



AND
THEN,
THE LAST
THING
SHE
WROTE
WAS...

BUT
ANYWAY,
I REALLY
AM SO
GLAD!

AS SHE GOT
CLOSER TO
THE END,
HER ENTRIES
BECAME
SHORTER AND
CLUMSIER,
KNOWING
THAT WAS THE
PERIOD SHE
BEGAN TO GET
SICK IS HEART-
BREAKING.

NEENA'S
DIARY CUT
OFF WELL
BEFORE THE
DAY SHE
JUMPED.

HER
DIARY...

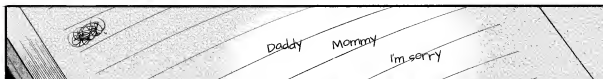




WE'RE
SO PROUD
OF YOU,
NEENA.

THAT'S
RIGHT.
AS YOUR
PARENTS,
THAT'S THE
GREATEST
GIFT WE
COULD
EVER
RECEIVE
FROM
YOU.

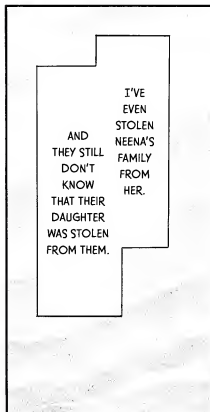
WE'RE
SO HAPPY
JUST TO
HAVE YOU
SMILE AND
WELCOME US,
AFTER OVER-
COMING YOUR
DIFFICULT
ILLNESS.



Daddy

Mommy

I'm sorry



AND
THEY STILL
DON'T
KNOW
THAT THEIR
DAUGHTER
WAS STOLEN
FROM THEM.

I'VE
EVEN
STOLEN
NEENA'S
FAMILY
FROM
HER.



LET
ME USE
YOUR
KITCH-
EN.
I'LL
COOK
FOR
YOU TO-
NIGHT.



KIND,
AND
WARM.



BUT THESE
PEOPLE...

ARE SO
GOOD...

BUT THAT'S
JUST WHY I
HAVE TO KEEP
ON FOOLING
THEM.



IS THIS WHAT
A NORMAL
FAMILY IS LIKE?
IT FEELS LIKE
SOMETHING
PRECIOUS,
SOMETHING
I CAN NEVER
HAVE...



THIS IS
SORT OF
EMBAR-
RASSING.

LOOK,
THERE
ARE
PHOTOS
FROM THE
SEAGULL.
NICE,
AREN'T
THEY?



YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
HELP OUT.
YOU JUST
CHAT WITH
YOUR
FATHER.

TH-
THANKS.

Teer
hee!
IT'S
FINE!







ONE
MORE
TIME...
AND
REPRO-
DUCE
IT ALL
PRE-
CISELY.

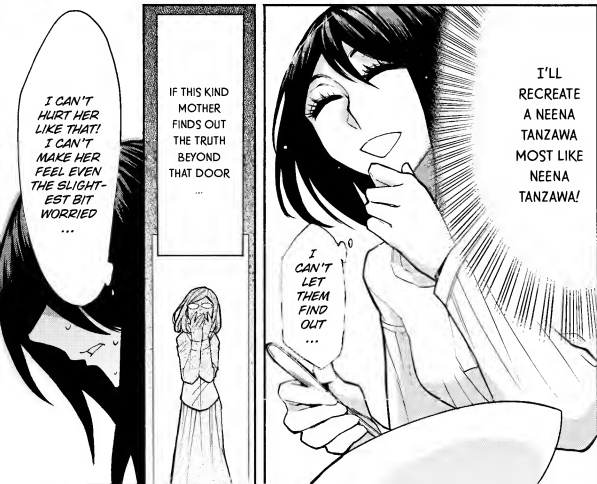
THE
WAY
SHE
TALKS
...

HABITS
...

NEENA'S
GES-
TURES
...

I WILL
REMEM-
BER...

I HAVE
TO KEEP
IT TO-
GETHER.



I CAN'T
HURT HER
LIKE THAT!
I CAN'T
MAKE HER
FEEL EVEN
THE SLIGHT-
EST BIT
WORRIED
...

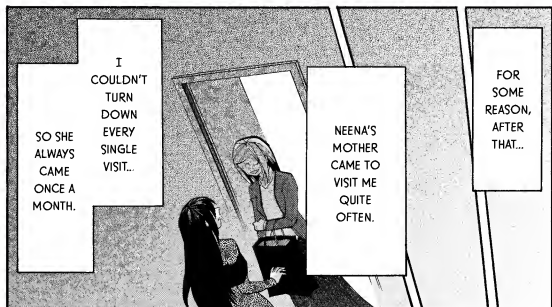
IF THIS KIND
MOTHER
FINDS OUT
THE TRUTH
BEYOND
THAT DOOR
...

I
CAN'T
LET
THEM
FIND
OUT
...

I'LL
RECREATE
A NEENA
TANZAWA
MOST LIKE
NEENA
TANZAWA!







SO SHE
ALWAYS
CAME
ONCE A
MONTH.

I
COULDN'T
TURN
DOWN
EVERY
SINGLE
VISIT...

NEENA'S
MOTHER
CAME TO
VISIT ME
QUITE
OFTEN.

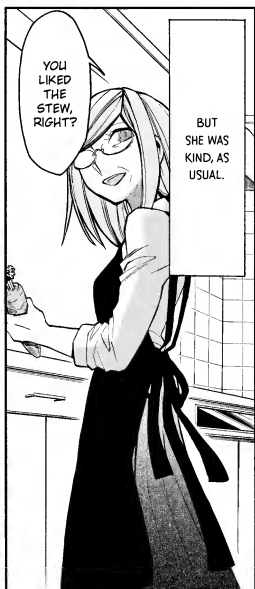
FOR
SOME
REASON,
AFTER
THAT...



IF MY
MOTHER
HAD BEEN
ALIVE...
WOULD
SHE BE
STANDING
IN THE
KITCHEN,
JUST
LIKE
THAT?



YEAH!
I LOVE
EVERY-
THING
YOU
MAKE!



YOU
LIKED
THE
STEW,
RIGHT?

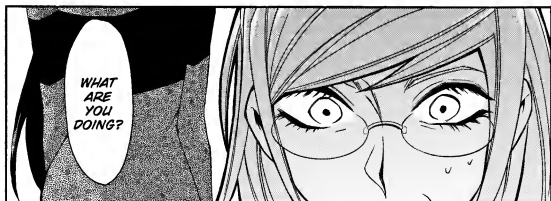
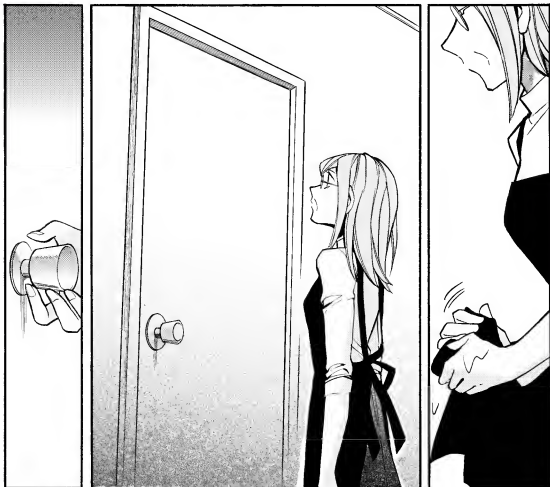
BUT
SHE WAS
KIND, AS
USUAL.

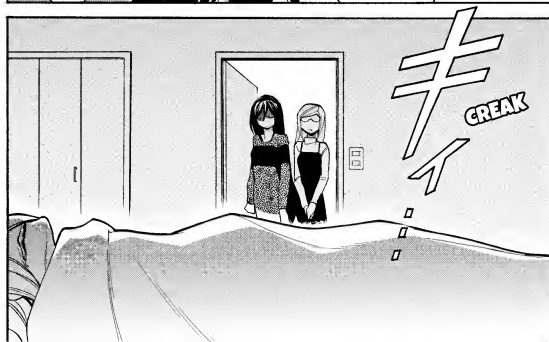
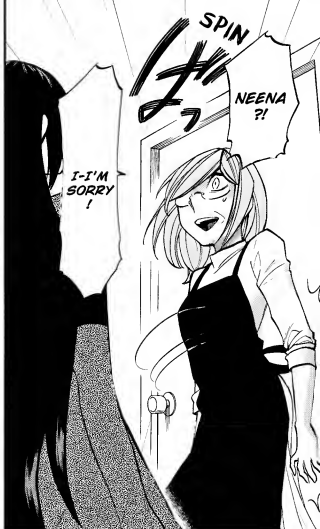


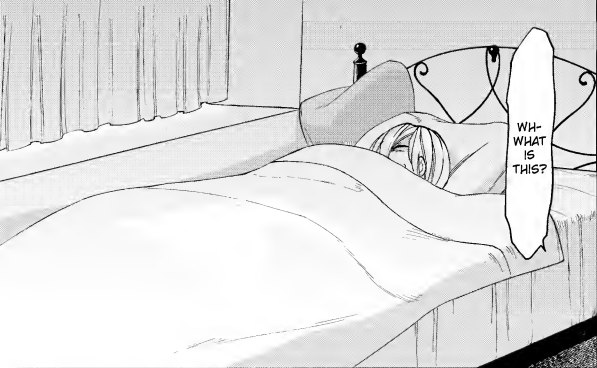
OH...
I HAVE
TO TAKE
THIS
CALL.

OKAY.

I FOUND
MYSELF
LEANING
ON HER
KINDNESS.





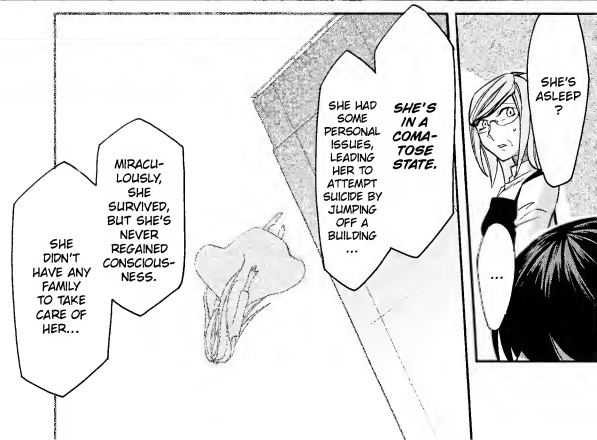


SHE
WAS MY
ASSIS-
TANT.

HER
NAME IS
KASANE.

INSTEAD OF
LEAVING HER
WITH HER
DOUBTS BY
KEEPING IT
HIDDEN.

SHE'LL
SUSPECT
ME LESS IF
I JUST
SHOW HER...



SHE
DIDN'T
HAVE ANY
FAMILY
TO TAKE
CARE OF
HER...

MIRACU-
LOUSLY,
SHE
SURVIVED,
BUT SHE'S
NEVER
REGAINED
CONSCIOUS-
NESS.

SHE HAD
SOME
PERSONAL
ISSUES,
LEADING
HER TO
ATTEMPT
SUICIDE BY
JUMPING
OFF A
BUILDING
...

**SHE'S
IN A
COMA-
TOSE
STATE.**

SHE'S
ASLEEP
?









Chapter Twenty-Three: Things to be Preserved, Things to be Destroyed



NOBU-
HIKO
UNO
IS
PLAY-
ING
THE
ROLE
OF THE
PROPH-
ET
JOKA-
NAAN.

I'D
EXPECT
NOTH-
ING
HE
TAKES
LESS OF
SUCH A
FANTAS-
TICAL
ROLE
AS THE
PROPH-
ET, AND
BEAUTI-
FULLY
MAKES
IT
REAL.

WHERE-
FORE
DOTH
SHE
LOOK AT
ME WITH
HER
GOLDEN
EYES,
UNDER
HER
GILDED
EYELIDS?"

"I
WILL
NOT
HAVE
HER
LOOK
AT
ME.

STOP,
STOP!

"I AM
SALOMÉ,
DAUGHTER
OF HERODIAS,
PRINCESS OF
JUDÆA..."



WHEN I
HEARD ABOUT
YOU, I LOOKED
FORWARD TO
SEEING WHAT
YOUR ACTING
WAS LIKE, BUT
YOU'VE BEEN
AN UTTER
LETDOWN!

YOU THINK
YOU CAN PLAY
SALOMÉ WITH
THAT KIND OF
ACTING?



THEN
ONE
MORE
TIME...

I-I'M
SORRY.

SINCE REHEARSALS
STARTED, NOBUHIKO
UNO HAS COMPLAINED
ABOUT ME
NUMEROUS TIMES.



IT'S
BECAUSE
YOU CODDLE
HER THAT
SHE DOESN'T
GET IT.

NEENA
TAN-
ZAWA
...



IT'S
GOOD
TO BE
PAS-
SIONATE
ABOUT
THIS
PLAY,
UNO-
KUN,
BUT
HER
ACTING
ISN'T
THAT
BAD.

HEY,
HEY,
HOLD
ON.

MAKI-
TA-
SAN
...

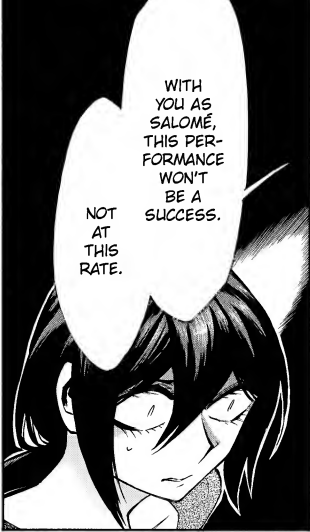
And that
sort of
thing is my
job, as the
director.



SOME-
ONE
ALWAYS
COMES
IN TO
SAVE
YOU,
AM I
RIGHT?
LIKE
JUST
NOW.

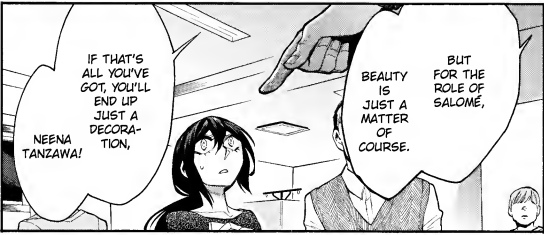
PEOPLE
HAVE
ALWAYS
BEEN
KIND TO
YOU...

BECAUSE
OF YOUR
GOOD
LOOKS.



WITH
YOU AS
SALOMÉ,
THIS PER-
FORMANCE
WON'T
BE A
SUCCESS.

NOT
AT
THIS
RATE.



IF THAT'S
ALL YOU'VE
GOT, YOU'LL
END UP
JUST A
DECORA-
TION,

NEENA
TANZAWA!

BUT
FOR THE
ROLE OF
SALOMÉ,
BEAUTY
IS
JUST A
MATTER
OF
COURSE.



A
MATTER
OF
COURSE
...

BEAUTY
IS...

I BECOME
TIMID AND
COWARDLY,
JUST LIKE
THE REAL
KASANE.

STIRS
UP THE
INFERI-
ORITY
COM-
PLEX
OF MY
UGLY
SELF.

THE
WAY
YOU
LOOK
DOWN
ON
ME
...

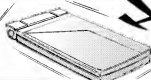
BUT
HE'S
RIGHT.
LATELY,
SOMETIMES
I JUST
HAVEN'T
BEEN
ABLE TO
CONCEN-
TRATE.

BUT
THAT'S
YOUR
FAULT,
TOO,
JOKANAAN!

BUT
HE'S
RIGHT.
LATELY,
SOMETIMES
I JUST
HAVEN'T
BEEN
ABLE TO
CONCEN-
TRATE.

I'VE
RECEIVED
A FAIR
AMOUNT
OF PRAISE
NOT JUST
FOR MY
LOOKS, BUT
FOR MY
ACTING,
TOO.

DESPITE
HIS RE-
MARKS
...



8ZZZZZ

AND...

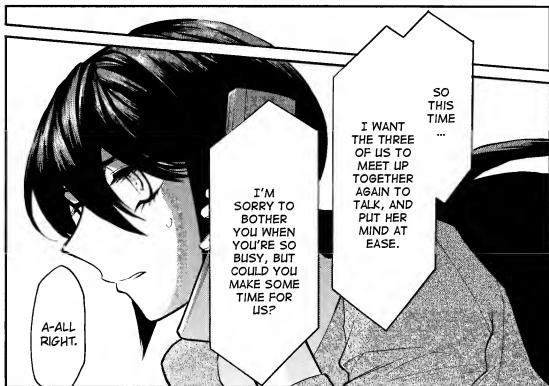
WHAT
IS IT,
DADDY?

THAT'S NOT
THE ONLY
REASON
I CAN'T
CONCENTRATE.

HELLO
?

BEEP







I SEE.

"IF SHE
GETS TOO
PERSISTENT
WITH HER
SUSPICIONS,
CALL ME."



SO THAT
MEANS WE
HAVE TO
SETTLE THIS,
HUH?

THERE'S THE
CHANCE THAT
THE NEXT TIME
YOU ALL GET
TOGETHER,
NEENA'S MOTHER
WILL HIT YOU WITH
A BARRAGE OF
QUESTIONS TO
MAKE SURE THAT
YOU'RE REALLY
NEENA.



I SUP-
POSE.

YOU CAN
JUST SAY
THAT YOUR
ILLNESS HAS
AFFECTED
YOUR MEMORY,
IN SPOTS.

REALLY,
THERE'S NO
NEED TO
RESPOND IF
YOU DON'T
KNOW THE
ANSWER.



BUT I DON'T
THINK IT WOULD
CONVINCE THE
MOTHER.

I THINK...I
COULD DECEIVE
THE FATHER
LIKE THAT...



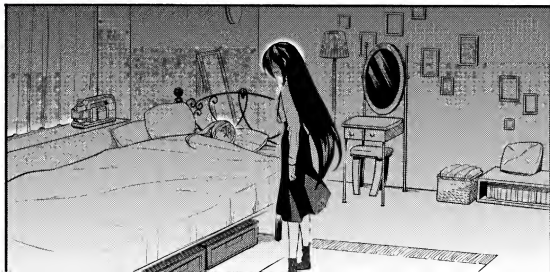
A SCE-
NARIO?



IT'S
FINE.
YOU JUST
HAVE TO
FOOL
HIM.

I'VE
PREPARED
A SCENARIO
FOR THIS.

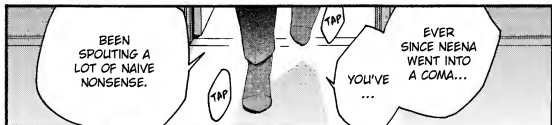






**AND
MAKE
ME STOP
NOW...
MAKE
ME STOP
DOING ALL
THESE
HORRIBLE
THINGS!**

**WAKE
UP AL-
READY!**





LOOK
IN THE
MIRROR!

SHOVE

DRAG



...!



I-I
DON'T
WANT
TO.

THE SCARIER
LOOKING
AT MY OWN
FACE GETS.

THE MORE
TIME I
SPEND WITH
NEENA'S
FACE ON...

I HAVEN'T
LOOKED
AT MY REAL
FACE FOR
A WHILE.

JUST
LOOK.

NO...



TH-
THAT
HURTS
!

LET
ME
GO!

WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING
?!

DRAG

LOOK!



THAT'S RIGHT. THIS FACE STOLE EVERYTHING FROM YOU.

THAT'S WHY YOU COULD NEVER HAVE FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR LOVE!

AM I WRONG?

I WAS TOO USED TO BEING NEENA. WHAT I SAW THERE WAS...

A MONSTER ...

A-

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I LAST LOOKED AT MY FACE, LOOKING AT IT FELT ALMOST LIKE GAZING AT THE FACE OF A STRANGER.



YES...
IT'S ALL
BECAUSE
OF THIS
FACE.

*YOU'RE
NOT.*



EVERY-
THING
...



EVERY-
THING!



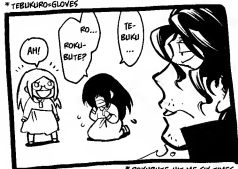


KASANE

GIRLS 3



* TEBUKURO=GLOVES



* ROKUBUTE=HIT ME SIX TIMES



Chapter Twenty-Four: Cold-blooded



"ART THOU
NOT AFRAID,
DAUGHTER OF
HERODIAS? DID I
NOT TELL THEE
THAT I HAD
HEARD IN THE
PALACE..."

"SUFFER
ME TO KISS
THY MOUTH,
JOKANAAN."

THE
BEATINGS OF
THE WINGS
OF THE ANGEL
OF DEATH, AND
HATH HE NOT
COME, THE
ANGEL OF
DEATH?"

"SUFFER
ME TO
KISS THY
MOUTH!"

GREAT. IT
LOOKS LIKE
SHE'S GOT
A GRASP ON
THE ROLE.

PRINCESS!
DO NOT
SPEAK
THESE
THINGS!"



"I WILL
NOT
LOOK AT
THEE..."



THOU ART
ACCURSED."

"THOU
ART AC-
CURSED,

SALOMÉ,

NOBU-
HIKO
UNO...



YOUR SCORN
AND MY OWN
SENSE OF
INFERIORITY!

I CAN'T LET
MYSELF TO
GIVE INTO...



I WILL
KISS THY
MOUTH."

"I WILL
KISS THY
MOUTH,

JOKANAAN;



YOU'VE STARTED
TO DO SOME DECENT
ACTING, AFTER A
LITTLE CHEWING OUT.



YOU
THINK
IT'S
BECAUSE
YOU
RAGGED
ON ME?

YOU'RE
JUST LIKE
SALOMÉ,
EVER MORE
PERSISTENT
THE MORE
JOKANAAN
REJECTS
HER.

LINO-
KUN
...



IT'S NOT
BECAUSE
OF YOU.

DON'T
GET THE
WRONG
IDEA.



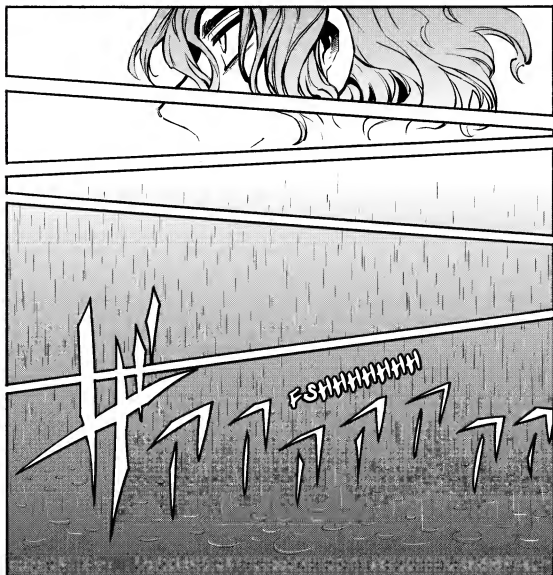
THIS IS
THE FIRST
TIME I'VE
EVER SEEN
HER ANGRY
LIKE THAT.



FROM
THE
MOMENT
I SAW
HER.

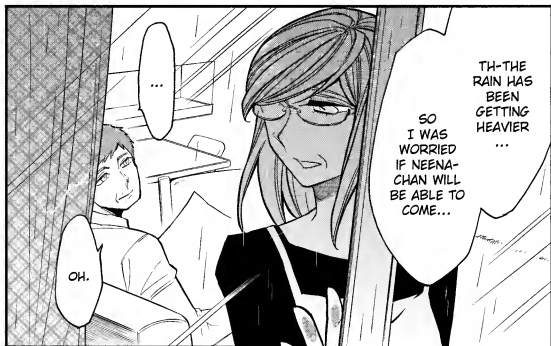
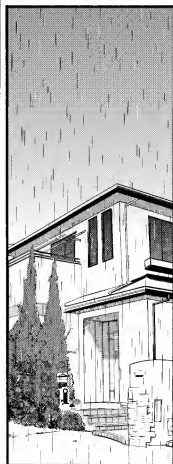


I ALWAYS
THOUGHT
SHE WAS
THAT SORT OF
CHARACTER
...





WHAT'S
WRONG?
YOU'VE
DONE
NOTHING
BUT LOOK
OUTSIDE.



OH.

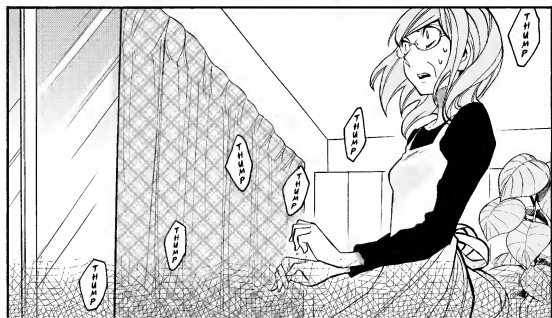
TH-THE
RAIN HAS
BEEN
GETTING
HEAVIER
...
SO
I WAS
WORRIED
IF NEENA-
CHAN WILL
BE ABLE TO
COME...



NO.

I'M
SCARED.

SCARED
OF MY DAUGH-
TER,
WHO IS
COMING
TO VISIT.



THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP



MOMMY!



HAS SHE
ALWAYS
SPOKEN
IN THAT
TONE
OF
VOICE?

WEL-
COME
HOME,
NEE-
NA!

I'M
BACK,
DADDY!



OH!

DING
DONG

HAS SHE...
ALWAYS HAD
THAT LOOK
IN HER EYES?



HAS SHE
ALWAYS
SMILED
LIKE THAT?

I'M
HOME!



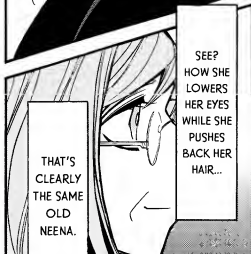
WHAT AM
I THINK?

NO...



NO,
I'M
OKAY!

IT'S
NOT FAR
FROM
THE
STATION.



THAT'S
CLEARLY
THE SAME
OLD
NEENA.

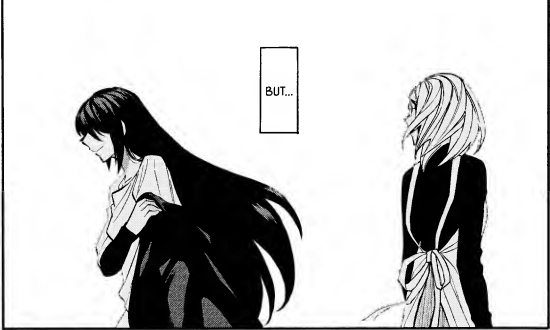
SEE?
HOW SHE
LOWERS
HER EYES
WHILE SHE
PUSHES
BACK HER
HAIR...

TO
THINK
THAT A
STRANGER
MIGHT BE
IMPER-
SONATING
MY
DAUGHTER
...



WELCOME
HOME,
NEENA.

YOU
MUST
HAVE HAD
A HARD
TIME, WITH
ALL THAT
RAIN.



A black and white manga panel showing two women from the waist up. The woman on the left has long, dark hair and is wearing a light-colored, loose-fitting top. She is looking down and slightly to her right. The woman on the right has short, light-colored hair and is wearing a dark, long-sleeved top with a light-colored sash tied around her waist. She is looking towards the first woman. The background is plain white.

BUT...



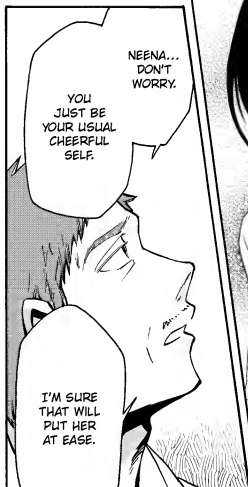
A close-up of a woman's face, tilted back. She has long, light-colored hair. Her eyes are wide open, and her mouth is slightly open. There are sweat droplets on her forehead. The word "SHIVER" is written in a stylized, jagged font above her head. The background is dark and textured.

WHAT
IF...

THERE'S
A COM-
PLETELY
DIFFERENT
PERSON...

DOING
A TERRI-
FYINGLY
ELABO-
RATE
IMPRES-
SION OF
HER?





NEENA...
DON'T
WORRY.

YOU
JUST BE
YOUR USUAL
CHEERFUL
SELF.

I'M SURE
THAT WILL
PUT HER
AT EASE.



I
WONDER
WHAT'S
GOING
ON WITH
HER?



LISTEN.

AND
MOVING
FORWARD,
THAT'D
MAKE USING
NEENA'S
FACE
DIFFICULT.

IF
YOU CAN'T
MANAGE
TO TRICK
HIM, MY
SCENARIO
WON'T
WORK...

JUST
MAKE
SURE THAT
THE DAD
DOESN'T
SUSPECT
YOU.



THAT
IS MY
LIFE.

DADDY
...



MY
LIFE AS
AN
ACTRESS
...



YOUR
LIFE
AS AN
ACTRESS
IS RIDING
ON THIS.

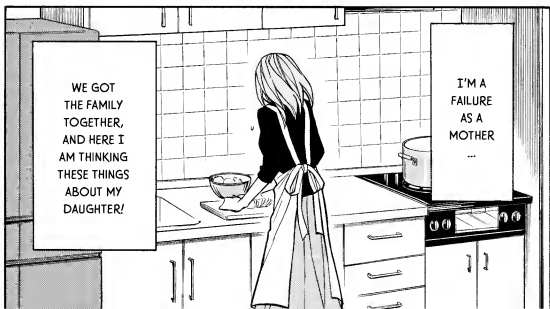
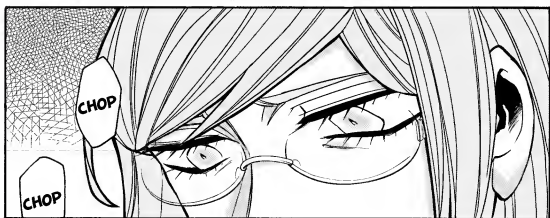


YEAH,

OF
COURSE.

I'M SURE
THAT'S OUT
OF THE
QUESTION,
SO DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT,
OKAY?

ABOUT
WHAT I
TOLD YOU
BEFORE
...







NOW
THAT I
THINK
OF IT
...



THAT'LL
BE A
BIG
HELP.

ALL RIGHT,
THEN I'LL
PEEL THE
POTATOES.



SHE'S
ALWAYS
BEEN A
KIND GIRL,
CONSIDERATE
OF HER
MOTHER...

YEAH!

TO TAKE
THE EYES
OFF THIS
POTATO?

OH!
THEN CAN
YOU USE
THIS SIDE
OF THE
PEELER...



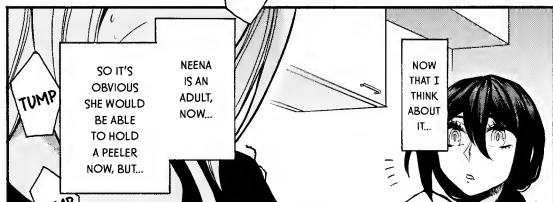
MOMMY!
I'LL HELP
YOU COOK!

SHE'S
ALWAYS
BEEN
LIKE THIS
...





I STOP
BEING ABLE
TO THINK
CALMLY.



SO IT'S
OBVIOUS
SHE WOULD
BE ABLE
TO HOLD
A PEELER
NOW, BUT...

NEENA
IS AN
ADULT,
NOW...

NOW
THAT I
THINK
ABOUT
IT...





Chapter Twenty-Four: the end





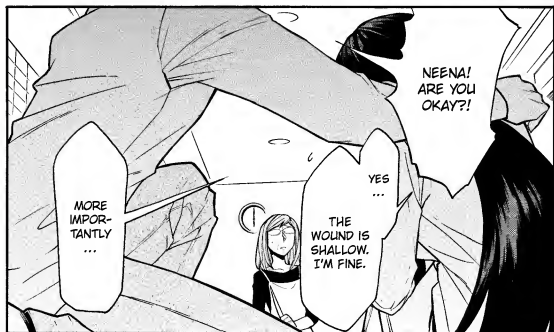
**WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!**



**WHO
THE
HELL
ARE
YOU?!**

MOM-
MY...

**YOU'RE
NOT
NEENA!**







OUR
DAUGHTER
IS...

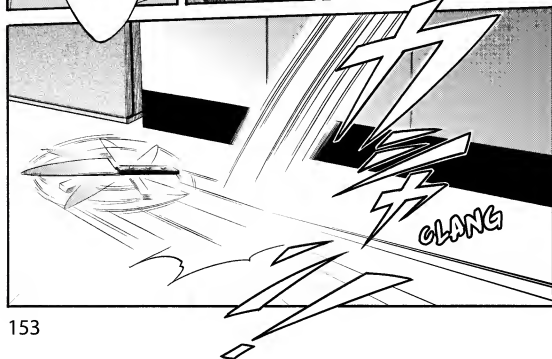


WHAT
?

WHY
CAN'T
YOU
TELL?



WHAT
ON EARTH
IS GOING
ON WITH
YOU?









BELIEVE
THAT
I AM
NEENA
TAN-
ZAWA.

THIS IS
YOUR
FINAL
CHOICE.

RIGHT?

I'M
YOUR
DAUGHTER,
NEENA.

LOOK,

TSU-
GUMI
TAN-
ZAWA.



SAY
IT TO
ME...

IF
YOU
DON'T
...

MOMMY,
PLEASE
...



I'VE
ALWAYS
BEEN QUIET
AND FRAIL,
EVER SINCE I
WAS LITTLE...
AND THEN I
CONTRACTED
SLEEPING
BEAUTY
SYNDROME,
TOO...

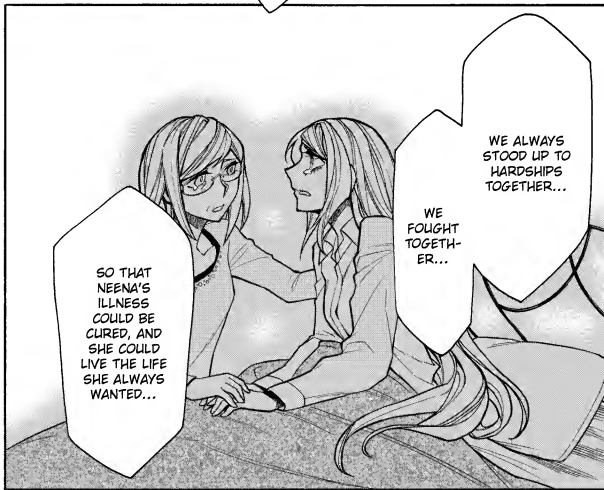
I FEEL
THAT WE
HAVE A
CLOSER
BOND THAN
MOST
MOTHERS
AND
DAUGHTERS.

YOU
CAN
TELL
THAT,
TOO,
RIGHT?

BUT
YOU WERE
ALWAYS
WITH ME,
EVERY
MINUTE.



YES
...
THAT'S
RIGHT.



SO THAT
NEENA'S
ILLNESS
COULD BE
CURED, AND
SHE COULD
LIVE THE LIFE
SHE ALWAYS
WANTED...

WE
FOUGHT
TOGETH-
ER...

WE ALWAYS
STOOD UP TO
HARDSHIPS
TOGETHER...



THAT'S
HOW I
KNOW
...

MOM-
MY...



I CAN'T
PROVE IT,
BUT I'M
CERTAIN.

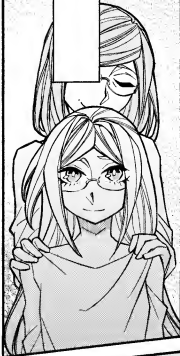
I'M A
MOTHER.



THAT
YOU'RE
NOT MY
DAUGH-
TER.

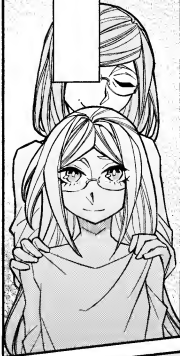


IT'S
LIKE A
POWER-
FUL
SPELL
THAT
BINDS
EVEN
FATE.



THE
BOND
OF
MOTHER
AND
CHILD

YES...I
KNOW
THAT,
TOO.



IF IT WERE
POSSIBLE.

I WOULD
HAVE
RATHER
NOT
MADE
YOU
UNHAPPY
...

MOM-
MY...

YOU
CAN'T
...

IT'S
TOO
BAD
...



YOU'RE
RIGHT...
WE FOUGHT
TOGETHER!

BUT...

I THOUGHT
NOW THAT
MY ILLNESS
WAS FINALLY
CURED,
I COULD
RETURN THE
FAVOR FOR
EVERYTHING
YOU'VE DONE
FOR ME!

WAHHHHH!

AHH

THAT
I'M SOME
IMPOSTOR
WHO'S
NOT YOUR
DAUGHTER?!

HOW CAN
YOU BE SO
OBSESSED
WITH THIS
DELUSION...

WHAT
?

I
ALWAYS...
NEEDED
A LOT OF
CARE AS
A CHILD,
DIDN'T
I...

YOU
WANT
TO BE
NEEDED
AS A
MOTHER,
SO YOU
CAN'T
ACCEPT
ME NOW
THAT I'M
INDEPEN-
DENT!

I'M
SURE...
YOU
WANT TO
THINK
OF ME
AS BEING
A LITTLE
GIRL
FOREVER
...



I WAS
PLAYING IN
THE RIVER,
AND THE
CURRENT
SWEEPED MY
FEET OUT
FROM
UNDER
ME.

THAT'S
RIGHT,
ONCE IN
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL,
WE ALL
WENT ON
A TRIP...

IT
WASN'T
JUST MY
HEALTH.

I WAS A
CRYBABY,
AND I'D
GET INTO
TROUBLE
...



I HIT A
ROCK,
AND THIS
SCAR HAS
REMAINED
HERE
SINCE
THEN.



YOU
DON'T
EVEN RE-
MEMBER
THIS,
MOMMY?



LET ME
SEE UP
CLOSE--

**STOP
THIS, AL-
READY!**

THERE'S
NO WAY
THAT SCAR
IS REAL!

I DO
REMEMBER!
BUT
THAT...



I
DIDN'T
WANT
TO
BELIEVE
IT, EITHER
...

BUT
NEENA
TOLD ME
SUCH AN
ILLNESS
EXISTS
...

AND I
WENT TO
CONSULT
WITH THE
DOCTOR WHO
HELPED US
WITH HER
SLEEPING
BEAUTY
SYNDROME
...



...

WHAT
?



YOU'RE
SICK!

THERE'S
A DISEASE
WITH
SYMPTOMS
LIKE
YOURS!



IT'S
CALLED
CAPGRAS
DELUSION,
AND IT'S
REAL.

HAVING
A DELUSION
THAT
SOMEONE
CLOSE TO
YOU HAS BEEN
REPLACED
BY SOMEONE
IDENTICAL
TO THEM...

YES...



IT'S
JUST A
POSSI-
BILITY,
RIGHT
NOW...

N-
NO
...

YOUR
WIFE,
THOUGH?



WHY DON'T
YOU TRY
GETTING HER
DIAGNOSED?

IF YOU
LIKE, I COULD
INTRODUCE
YOU TO A
DOCTOR WHO
HAS TREATED
SIMILAR
PATIENTS.

IT'S
RARE,
BUT
THERE
HAVE
BEEN
CASES IN
JAPAN.

THE
MORE
SHE
STRUG-
GLES,
THE
MORE
SHE BE-
COMES
ENTAN-
GLED.

YOU
POINTED
A KNIFE
AT YOUR
OWN
DAUGH-
TER!

HOW
COULD
YOU
BE
SANE
?

P-
PLEASE
!

BELIEVE
ME!

I'M
SANE!

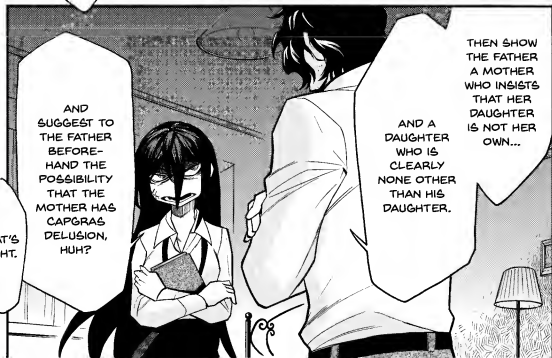
DIAG-
NOSED?



PUSH THE
MOTHER
UNTIL SHE
ADMITS HER
SUSPICIONS
TOWARD
YOU.



THAT
CAN'T
BE
...

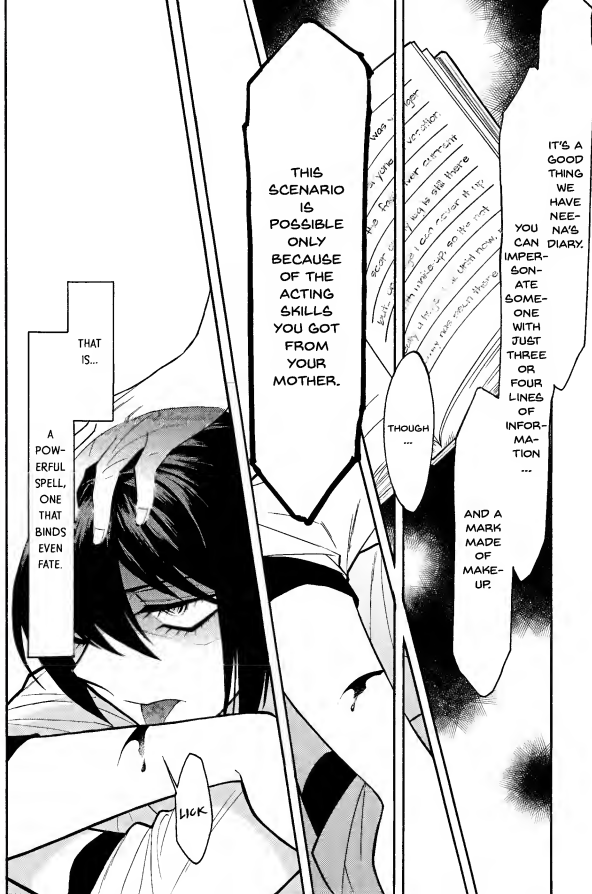


THAT'S
RIGHT.

AND
SUGGEST TO
THE FATHER
BEFORE-
HAND THE
POSSIBILITY
THAT THE
MOTHER HAS
CAPGRAS
DELUSION,
HUH?

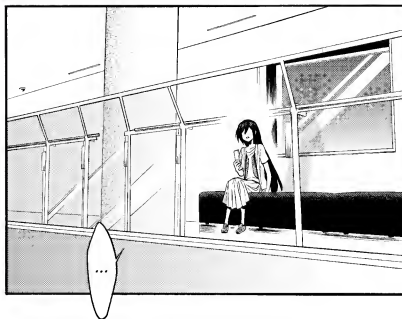
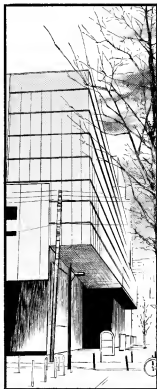
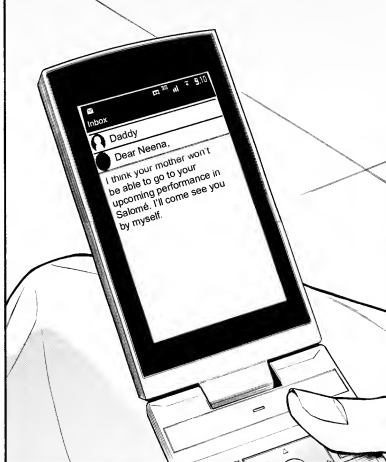
AND A
DAUGHTER
WHO IS
CLEARLY
NONE OTHER
THAN HIS
DAUGHTER.

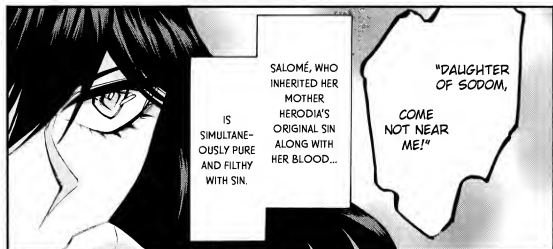
THEN SHOW
THE FATHER
A MOTHER
WHO INSISTS
THAT HER
DAUGHTER
IS NOT HER
OWN...

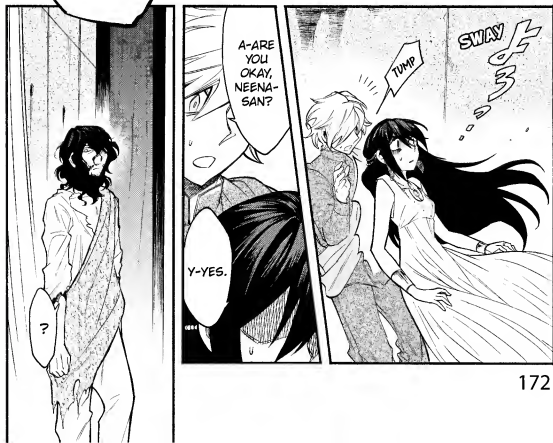


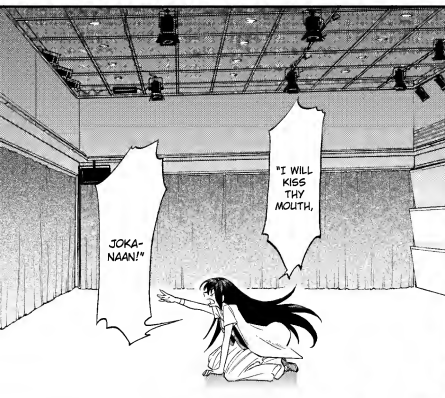


Chapter Twenty-Six: Light that Stands Apart





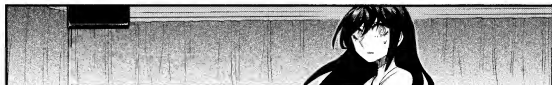




THOU ART
ACCURSED.



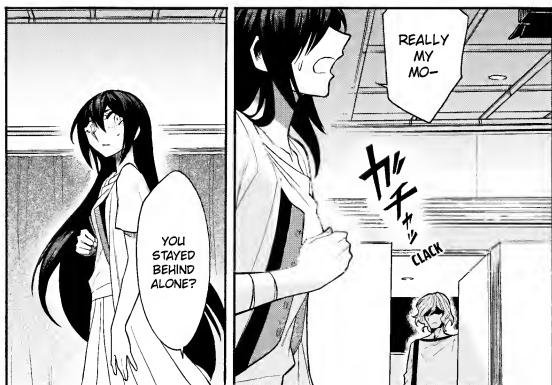
THOU ART
ACCURSED,
SALOMÉ.



BUT...

YES...
I'M
CURSED,
TOO.



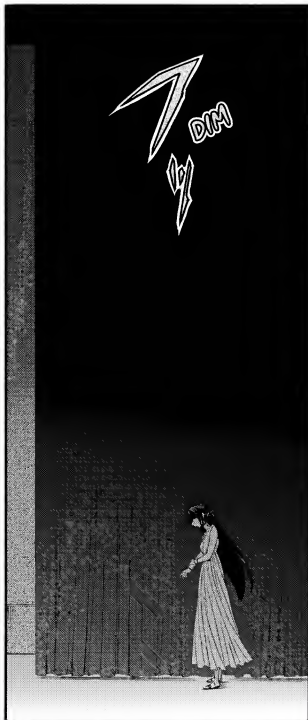
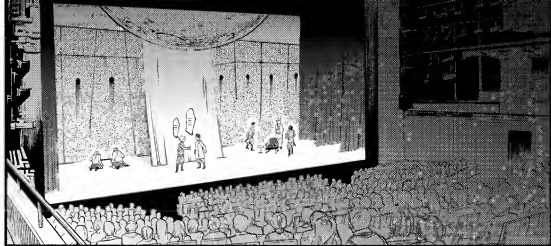


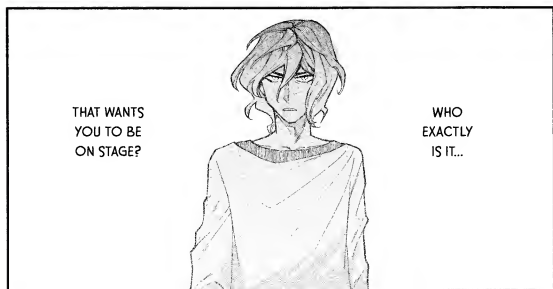
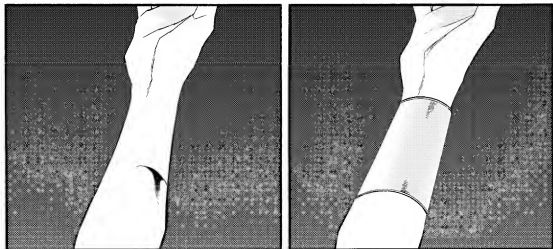








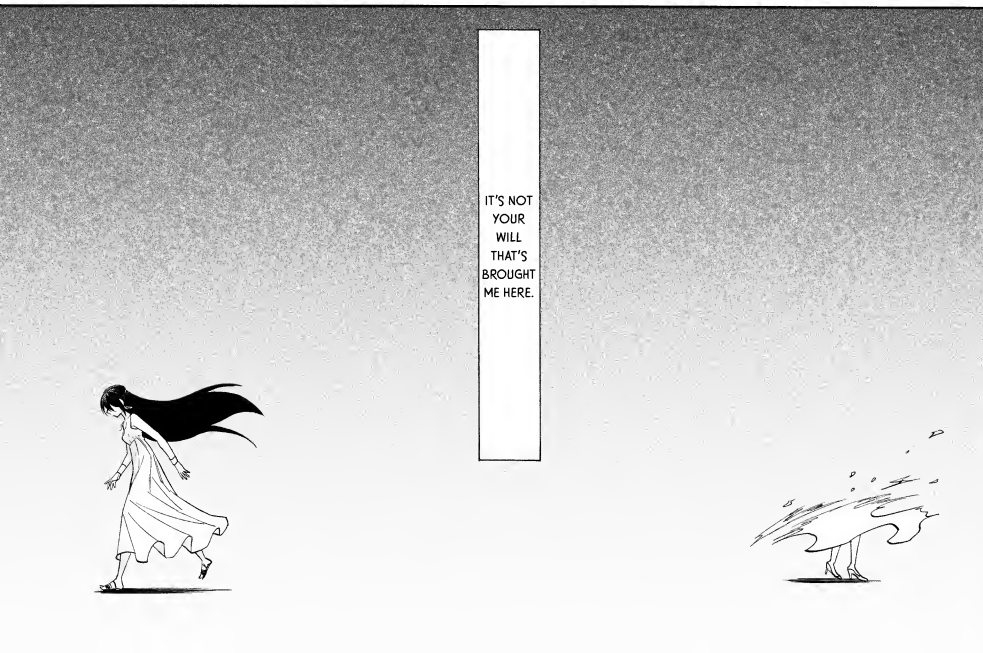
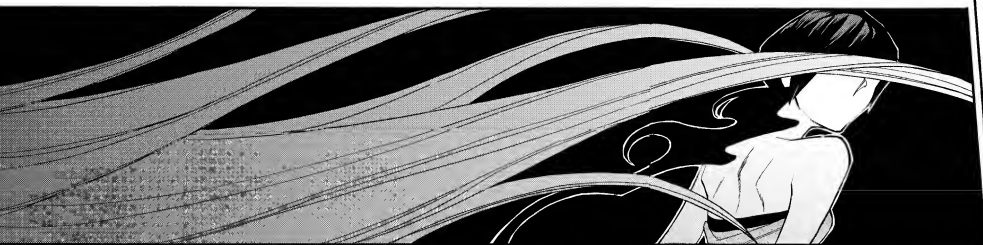




THAT WANTS
YOU TO BE
ON STAGE?

WHO
EXACTLY
IS IT...

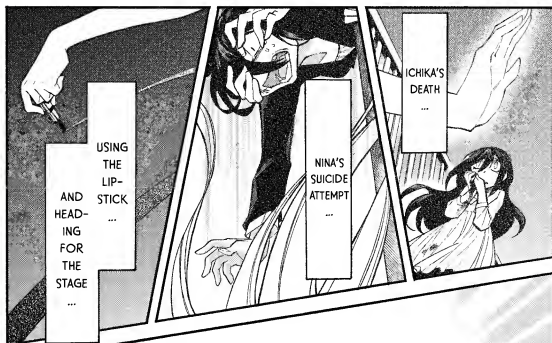




IT'S NOT
YOUR
WILL
THAT'S
BROUGHT
ME HERE.



I'M SURE YOU'RE JUST AN ILLUSION, COME FROM MY GUILT FOR MY DESIRES.



USING
THE
LIP-
STICK
...
AND
HEAD-
ING
FOR
THE
STAGE
...

NINA'S
SUICIDE
ATTEMPT
...

ICHIKA'S
DEATH
...

SOME-
WHERE IN
MY HEART...
I TRIED TO
MAKE ALL
OF IT YOUR
FAULT.



I CAN
GO ON
ALONE.

BUT
NOW
...

IF IT
CAN
GET
THESE
LIGHTS
WITHIN
MY
GRASP,

NO
MATTER
HOW
DIRTIED
WITH
SIN I
BE-
COME,



CRAWL-
ING UP
OF MY
OWN
WILL.

I KNOW
NOT
WHAT IT
MEANS."

"IT IS
STRANGE
THAT THE
HUSBAND
OF MY
MOTHER
LOOKS AT
ME LIKE
THAT.

"I WILL
NOT STAY.
I CANNOT
STAY.

WHY
DOES THE
TETRARCH
LOOK AT
ME ALL THE
WHILE WITH
HIS MOLE'S
EYES UNDER
HIS SHAKING
EYELIDS?"

INTO
THE
LIGHTS
...

THEN I
WILL RISE
FROM THE
DEPTHS...



HEH
HEH.
THE
WHOLE
ATMO-
SPHERE
OF THE
THEATER
HAS
CHANGED.

AND
EVEN
WITH-
OUT
LOOKING,
I CAN
SENSE
THE
PRIDE
IN HER
VOICE.

YOU'VE
TRANS-
FORMED,
NEENA
TANZAWA.

SO
YOU'RE
THE
KIND
OF PERSON
WHO CAN
ONLY EVER
BE ALIVE
ON STAGE,
TOO, HUH?

ABOUT KASANE FUCHI



Now then, about Kasane ...



Ultimately, it's just a motif.

This story is based on the motif of a ghost story from the Edo period.

First of all, thank you for buying volume three.

HYAAA
HA
HA
HA
HA!

EEEEH
HEH
HEH
GAGLE
GAGLE

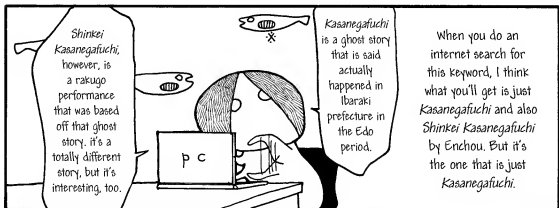
Good evening everyone, (currently 3AM)
I'm Daruma Matsuura.

I'm drinking that and drawing this.



THAT STORY IS KNOWN AS KASANEGAFUCHI.

Ohh.



Shinkei Kasanegafuchi, however, is a rakugo performance that was based off that ghost story. It's a totally different story, but it's interesting, too.

Kasanegafuchi is a ghost story that is said actually happened in Ibaraki prefecture in the Edo period.

When you do an internet search for this keyword, I think what you'll get is just Kasanegafuchi and also Shinkei Kasanegafuchi by Enchou. But it's the one that is just Kasanegafuchi.

* I started keeping medaka fish.

Apparently, it was the ghost of Kasane, who was Youemon's (Kasane's father's) previous wife. He had killed her because she was ugly and unpleasant.

If thou shouldst approach, I would bite you to death!



Oh, no! What to do?

FLAIL

ばいん

In Hanyuu village, Shimosa province, a girl named Kiku was possessed by a malicious spirit named Kasane, and the spirit began venting all its resentments.

I'll give you a very casual summary of the tale.



Ack! She's possessed!



Ahhh! Bread!

Ahhh! Forgive me!

Ahhh! Murderer!

Go buy me some bread!

Sei-san from the next village over witnessed you doing it!

Yocchan, don't you feign ignorance!

My limited page count has made the story rather silly. I apologize. There's a book where you can read more, and it's quite interesting, so if you're interested, please do read it.

Now then, see you again after volume four.

Kasane's grave is in Houzouji in Ibaraki, and there's also a memorial for her in Yuuterji in Tokyo as well. (I visited it.)

My source is a book called 'Recorded stories of liberating dead spirits.' (A version translated into modern Japanese is available.)



However, a high priest named Yuuten heard of this incident and came running to the scene. With his mysterious powers, he released Kasane, Kiku went back to normal, and they all lived happily ever after.

※ There's a little more after this, but I'll abridge it.



Leave!

Not unless you build a Buddha statue of meee!

WHAP

END

*Japanese title: Shiryō gedatsu monogatari Kikigaki

Kasane 3

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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